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TWELVE CENTURIES OF ROME

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GEORGE PHILIP BAKER

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PLATE I



Imperator Cæsar AUGUSTUS

(From a Sardonyx Cameo in the British Museum)

TWELVE CENTURIES OF ROME

(753 B.C. — A.D. 476)

BY

G. P. BAKER

Author of 'Hannibal,'
'The Fighting Kings of Wessex,' etc.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to provide an outline of the history of Rome which shall embody modern views of the subject and yet appeal to the reader who is interested in the results rather than in the processes of historical research. It is necessarily very brief. To compress twelve hundred years into less than six hundred pages involves the omission of much detail: but it has the advantage that it does bring out the story, the elements of continuity, cumulation and culmination. A correct general view is a very important matter. The minute details of history are quite naturally the main interest of the scholar; and to ascertain and establish them is a necessary preliminary to any generalization. No one who has successfully achieved a knowledge of these details has ever regretted the trouble, or denied the pleasure and fascination of the pursuit. But very many fail to find a comprehensible meaning in the multitude of detail which is called history, and so turn away from it in despair or distaste. Here, in these pages, an attempt is made to provide a clue through the labyrinth, a guide through the multiplicity and confusion, and a reason why the study of Roman history should be important to us.

To begin with the reason: the influence of the Roman tradition has been a stronger force than any other in moulding the institutions under which we live. This is no less true of the United States than of Britain, France and Italy. Those men who laid the foundation of American polity were saturated with Roman history and Roman political experience. We trace our political ancestry back to the Rome of Cæsar, Cicero and Livy rather than (as Russians might) to the eastern Rome on the Bosphorus. There have been times when modern civilization had good cause to look anxiously back for the guidance of its predecessor. The Renaissance was the product of an age which was fast leaving behind it the prevailing agricultural economy of earlier times, and was emerging into

the days of industry, commerce and finance, the supremacy of money and the systematic organization of production. The new rulers of Europe in those days welcomed with joy and gladness the record of a world in which men had been very much like themselves, and had faced the same problems and breathed the same spiritual air. The new Crassus and the new Mæcenas hailed news of the old. . . . The whole of the classical philosophy was acceptable to men who found it throw a revealing light upon their own paths. It was this applicability of the Græco-Roman record to the circumstances of the day which lay at the root of the enthusiasm with which it was hailed.

If something of that first enthusiasm has now faded, it is merely because our world has moved and grown. We no longer need to refer to the classical age for all our experience. In some ways – though not in all – we have moved beyond its advice and help.

History began by being a branch of philosophy. It was treated (as a great German scholar said) 'as if it had never really happened.' The words of the classical authors were too much admired to be adequately examined. The nineteenth century – largely under the influence of that same scholar – saw a revolution effected in the study of history. The whole body of ancient literature was subjected to a re-examination so deep and searching that the minutest peculiarities of text or manuscript were brought into account as evidence. The world never before saw such an investigation. A whole series of allied sciences was created – numismatics, diplomatics and many others. Three or four generations of systematic study of this kind revised, and sometimes revolutionized, our conception of the facts. Above all, it inspired and stimulated the human intelligence. It turned the dreary old round into a great adventure.

The upshot of this wonderful work was to concentrate attention upon the Historical Fact. To demonstrate a certainty or – failing that – a probability, became the object of historical study. As time went on, this object became conceived of more and more as the only possible purpose of a historical work. But the work of investigation can never exhaust the task of history; and unless we are to face the slightly alarming prospect

of several more centuries of re-investigation with (horrible to think!) different results, or (still worse!) the same ones, we are bound not only to discover the facts, but to trace their significance. Granting that such and such a proposition is true, we are bound to ask what difference its truth makes to us. And this is a question that the historian is bound to answer. He has to show, not merely how or why a proposition is true, but the effect produced upon our total experience by its established truth; an effect which is liable to vary from generation to generation.

There is, therefore, a kind of history which deals with results rather than with processes, and which collects into a form useful to other men the products of the specialists' activity. This kind of general history has a distinct nature of its own. Like a bridge, it is a way of getting somewhere – a way over – a *viaduct*. It conducts us into a mood. It is the preliminary note which sets the pitch for the rest of our activities. It puts us into perspective; it gives us a standard by which to measure ourselves; it is our observation to give us our position in the course of our navigation through the ages. This is not merely a genuine utility – it belongs to the small class of super-utilities; it is one of those things absolutely indispensable because it opens the way to so many others. And Roman history has the particular advantage of a long base-line. . . . The three or four recent centuries which comprise all that some people care for in the way of history are worthless for the purpose of explaining to ourselves the course of human evolution and the precise curve it follows. But Roman history is a tale twelve centuries long, and longer still if we include the wonderful story of Constantinople. A book like this has, therefore, various aims to fulfil. One aim has been to keep the proportion of the story and the correct relative sizes of things; preserving the element of personal character, the element of mechanical evolution, the part played by will, the part played by fortune. There can, of course, be very little detail; but the story is here – the 'plot.' Those who want the detail must go to the fountain-heads for themselves. Indeed, one definite purpose has been to make the earlier chapters a tolerable guide through the many and sometimes confusing details of Livy.

Ever since criticism of the classical authors began (and French scholars were at it long before Niebuhr and the Germans) there has been a tendency on the part of some historians to tear up Livy's account and to invent an early history for Rome out of their own heads. The innocent general reader who dipped into the work of Livy was horrified to discover that he was no longer qualified to understand it. Everything there was, (by the new methods) incorrect; and in fact almost the only events which never happened in early Rome were those which Livy tells us did. It was necessary to read the works of Germans, Italians and Frenchmen in order to ascertain the real truth of which Livy was so lamentably ignorant: and it was only when we discovered that they all disagreed that we began to wonder whether there might not be a flaw in the process. Even if criticism finds much to revise in Livy, it cannot revise the main outline he transmits to us. If what he gives us is not the early history of Rome, then there is no early history of Rome. And on the whole, the tale he tells is credible and convincing. He sought the truth, and told it, as far as he could, in one of the most beautiful prose styles ever written.

This view of Livy has been gradually returning to acceptance during the last twenty years, especially among the English-speaking nations. It underlies the work of such American historians as Tenney Frank and G. W. Botsford, and of the prevailing English school. Without Livy it is almost impossible to put a meaning upon the later history of Rome. His explanation of the beginning is essential to our understanding of the end. And in any case, the work of Livy is the moral testament of republican Rome – the record of her own view of what she meant and what she did.

The 'Romans' who constituted the effective element in the Roman empire were not a race, nor a people, nor a nation in the ethnic sense; they were an association, blended into unity by education, and perpetuating a tradition which they received from their predecessors and handed on to those who followed them. This system of education, this tradition, was the creation of the earlier Roman aristocracy, who passed it on to the oligarchy of the later republic, who in turn transmitted it to the empire. The strange malady which attacked the later empire was simply the slow dilution of this tradition, its

gradual and irrevocable fading with time and wear, till it would no longer bind men together as once it had done. The actual Romans themselves -- the Servilii, the Quintii, the Corneli -- Coruncanius, Manius Curius, Decius Mus -- had long, long mouldered to dust. As their memory too crumbled, the society they had founded mouldered with it. Out of its ruins sprang up a fresh and powerful shoot, very young, very green, very hungry -- the civilization of later Europe, with a new system of aristocracy, a new religion, a new tradition.

The occasional footnotes are intended to help the general reader to find further details and fuller statements than could be given in the text. No book is quoted which is inaccessible to or unreadable by any ordinary person; and none is mentioned which cannot be found by the English reader in the library of the Society for Roman Studies -- of which every one interested in Roman history ought to be a member.

In order to avoid encumbering the narrative, the chronological data have been collected in a series of tables where they can be more readily grasped by the eye. The 'Comparative Scales' are not intended to suggest any parallel or any theory, but are meant to give the reader a better idea of the real lapse of time involved. Certain geographical details are similarly given graphically in the sketch maps. It is neither possible nor desirable to print large-scale maps with a short history, and those readers who wish for more are sure to be already provided with such maps as those of Kiepert or Grundy, or Vidal-Lablache.

The portraits, with two exceptions, are enlarged from coins -- by far the most authentic and perhaps artistically the most interesting source of portraiture. Many of them are contemporary; and some -- such as that of Flamininus on Plate II and of Marcus Antonius on Plate III, are historical documents of some value. The author has to thank Mr. Harold Mattingly of the British Museum for very kind help and advice in the choice of these coins.

G. P. B.

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BOOK I

ARISTOCRACY

CHAPTER I

THE TRADITIONS OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE (753 B.C. – 494 B.C.)

I

A cow yoked on the left hand, a bull on the right; a bronze colter in the plough, and the ploughman – he did not plough by regular occupation – girt up with the ends of his cloak tied in a knot in front of him, and the middle part carried over his head. All this for luck. His left hand on the plough-tail, his right hand on the plough-stilt, pulling a little to throw the furrow inwards to the left. Then, starting some distance from the Tiber bank, not very far below the place where the famous old bridge, the Pons Sublicius, was in after times to stand, team and plough and ploughman cut a furrow widdershins along the edge of a flat-topped hill, which was divided into two by a slight depression. At the corner they turn at right angles; they enter the depression – and, keeping well to the top of the left-hand slope, they go on ploughing the furrow. Half-way along, the ploughman lifts the colter clear of the ground. After a few steps he brings down the colter and continues the furrow. That for a gateway. As he goes, it is his duty to pray – at any rate, to aspire – on behalf of the new city, whose boundaries he is describing. He tries. Vague images, misty ideals, indescribable hopes float through his mind. He takes refuge in murmuring commonplaces. Like most of us, he is not good at imagining the future. This is the Palatine Hill that he is crossing. Here, in days to come, will rise the house of Cicero – the palace of Augustus – the Apolline Library, with its Reading Room; down in the valley beyond will tower the

Coliseum; away at his elbow will stand the Arch of Constantine. He thinks of many things, but fails to think of these. The future is always much greater than anything our little minds can imagine.

At the next corner of the hill he again turns at right angles, and drives the furrow across the gentle slope which joins the Palatine to the Velia. Again he lifts the plough for a gateway. At the next corner perhaps he pauses to wipe his hands. Down there, on the right, in the marsh which lies rank between this hill and the rugged rock opposite, will some day be the Forum Romanum: the rock will be crowned with the great temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, with its roof of gilded tiles gleaming in the Italian sun. But not yet. He resumes his ploughing. He skirts the steep hill-side – he comes again towards the low ground, and at length stops his plough where the Stairs of Cacus stand. He has cut out the Pomœrium of the oldest Rome – Roma Quadrata – Foursquare Rome – the village on the Germal. He hopes that it will be fortunate and auspicious. How fortunate, how auspicious, he cannot guess!

Who was this man?

He existed: for the village on the Germal was a real place; and the custom of marking the boundaries of a new city with the plough was an ancient Italian custom, far older than Rome. Some man certainly guided the plough round Roma Quadrata.

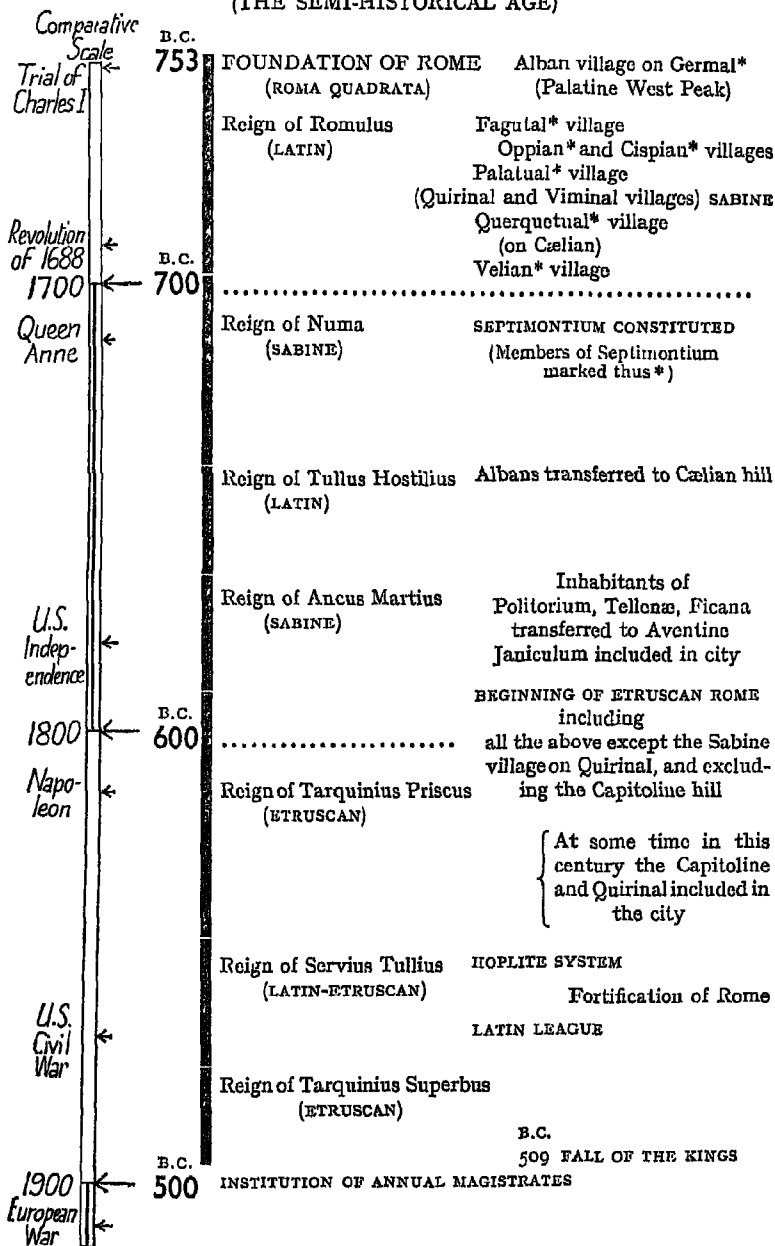
The Romans themselves called him Romulus.

II

According to the story which the Romans in later ages regarded as orthodox, a man named Romulus, at some time in the middle of the eighth century before Christ, took service with King Numitor of Alba Longa. Numitor (so the tale goes) had been more or less dispossessed by his younger brother Amulius, and his children had been murdered. When Romulus and Remus, the twin brethren, came to Alba Longa with their 'Shepherds,' the Celeres, Numitor seized his chance. He employed them to overthrow Amulius and to regain his throne. They had no serious difficulty in carrying out their task. The rewards were large: and they included what was either a commission or a permission to establish a stronghold on the banks of the Tiber, where there was an ancient river-crossing.

FIRST CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(THE SEMI-HISTORICAL AGE)



This stronghold was Rome.

It was not a very formidable stronghold, as far as fortification went: it consisted of a group of round thatched huts, wooden-framed and plastered with clay, and its defences were nothing much more serious than hurdle framing. On three sides the steep scarp of the hill served as a defence: and at the foot of these slopes the soft and often marshy ground was a further protection. The only formidable element in the new settlement consisted from the first of its inhabitants. Romulus, with his 'Celeres' and his immigrants from Alba Longa, and the refugees to whom he extended protection, were pastoralists living on their flocks and herds, and on a very little primitive agriculture. According to tradition, Rome was an 'Asylum.' All refugees who could 'touch wood' there were safe under the king's protection.¹

The traditional character of this first Rome upon the Palatine Hill is marked by the famous story of Remus. He jumped derisively over the wall of Rome, to show what kind of wall it was; and Romulus – to show what kind of king he was – slew him, saying: 'So perish all who pass my wall.' . . . For thirty-seven years Romulus presided over his new foundation. By the time he had finished, it was no longer merely the headquarters of a ferocious bandit; it was rapidly becoming an organized community.

Roman tradition carefully gilded the formidable personality of this fierce founder. It had a splendid but very improbable story to tell of him. According to this story, Numitor recognized in Romulus and Remus no less surprising persons than his long-lost grandsons, with whom Amulius had done away. Taken from their mother, Rhea Silvia, they had been abandoned on the banks of the Tiber. A she-wolf had befriended them, and had suckled these strange cubs; a half-wild shepherd had found them, and had brought them up. With their stalwart Celeres to certify them, Numitor instantly recognized his grandsons. It is possible that Amulius was far from sharing his conviction: but the opinions of Amulius on the subject were generally neglected, and his shrift was short.

¹ The existence of this Asylum has been denied; but the Roman tradition on the subject is clear. It is the spot pointed out as its site that constitutes the difficulty – the hollow between the two peaks of the Capitoline Hill. In the earliest times the Capitoline was not yet occupied.

The certification that Romulus was the long-lost grandson of Numitor enabled the Roman antiquarians to provide him with a wonderful pedigree: for Numitor was the descendant of a long line of venerable priest-kings who 'reigned in Alba Longa on the throne of Aventine.' Numitor was the son of Proca, who was the son of Aventine, who was the son of Romulus Silvius, the son of Agrippa Silvius, the son of Tiberinus Silvius, the son of Capetus Silvius, the son of Capys Silvius, the son of Atys Silvius, the son of Alba Silvius, the son of Latinus Silvius, the son of Æneas Silvius, the son of Silvius who was born in the woods, who was the son of Ascanius, or 'Julus,' king at Alba Longa, who was the son of Jupiter Indiges of Lavinium, who was no less a person than Æneas, the son of Anchises, who escaped from Troy carrying his father upon his back. The adventures of Æneas may be read in the pages of Vergil. The pride with which the Roman looked upon the pedigree of the Founder of his city might perhaps be matched in depth by the gratified surprise which Romulus would have felt, if he had ever heard of it.

III

Whatsoever we ourselves may think of the pedigree of Romulus, it does not seem particularly to have commended him to the citizens of his new city of Rome – that is, if they too had ever heard of it. If he were the descendant of hereditary priest-kings, he was not himself regarded as especially priestly, and he did not found a hereditary kingship. The Roman kingship, as the Romans themselves recorded it, was military and elective. It bore all the signs of being a mainly secular dignity begun by a man who was not of distinguished descent and had no claim to ancient or sacred powers. Romulus is depicted to us as more in touch with the populace of broken or tribeless men, merchants, wanderers, escaped slaves or criminals, and simple isolated individuals, who grew up round the Asylum, than with the tribesmen who brought their rituals and mysteries and pride and exclusiveness complete from Alba. His end seems to imply that he was secretly murdered by the tribesmen. The populace, the plebs, were puzzled, but accepted the accomplished fact.

The development of Rome during the period covered by the

traditional Reign of Romulus consisted of the foundation of a number of additional villages. The second to be built was on the Fagutal, a spur of the Esquiline eastward of the Palatine. Other spurs of the Esquiline – the Oppian and the Cispian – were built upon. The other summit of the Palatine Hill, the 'Palatual,' was settled by a community. The Querquental, the slope of the Cælian Hill, south of the Palatine, received a village. Finally the Velia, the slight elevation between the Palatine and the Esquiline, was occupied. This made a group of seven small communities, all of them of Latin blood and speech. Two further villages were established, a little further off, upon the Quirinal and Viminal – but these were Sabine. The seven Latin communities formed a federation known as the 'Septimontium': and long centuries afterwards its religious festivals were still maintained.

Both from tradition and from archæology it is evident that a certain amount of Sabine blood and influence existed in the midst of the seven Latin communities, in addition to the two distinct Sabine villages on the Quirinal. Sabine influence was a powerful factor in the development of Rome. It was a civilization of an older type than the Latin, going back to the Neolithic age in some of its features – whereas the Latin was distinctively a culture that had its roots in the Bronze Age. The Roman tradition is that Romulus succeeded to the kingship of the Sabines as well as of the Romans. The next step possibly took place when Romulus was murdered. The deed was certainly done by tribesmen; but if the tribesmen were Sabines, or if Sabines led the way,¹ we should have an adequate explanation why the second King of Rome was a Sabine from the city of Cures. The Sabines in their turn had seized the kingship of Rome.

Numa the Sabine was generally regarded, in later times, as the first founder and systematizer of Roman religion. Romulus had been a great chief. Numa was a great medicine man, full of all the curious doctrines, rituals and practices which make up

¹ If, as one version of the story has it, he disappeared in a thunderstorm (Livy I, 16), we must remember that the Thunder-Father was a Sabine god, as distinct from the Oak Father of the Palatine Romans. The Sabines seem to have been mountaineers – the Latins foresters. The Sabines buried their dead; the Latins cremated. The derivation of Latin civilization from the 'Terramare' culture of northern Italy seems now to be generally accepted. The two peoples, however, coalesced with so little difficulty that the distinctions must have been superficial.

primitive religion. According to the tradition of the Romans it was Numa who turned the brigand village upon the Palatine into an organized and disciplined community following the arts of peace, and swayed by certain definite principles which all agreed to obey. From the day of his accession Rome began to take on that religious colour which, through all her alternations, distinguished her as republic and empire, and to this day distinguishes her still.

Over all the intervening centuries, the Romans have managed to convey to us a deep impression of the augustness and purity of Numa's character. We feel, in reading his story,¹ that he must have been a man who, after the mode and method of his day, walked with God. So clear is the impress, that it is difficult to dismiss him as purely mythical. If no lost patriarch named Numa ever existed, then some lost Shakespeare must have existed to invent him.

IV

Tullus Hostilius, the third king of Rome, was the candidate of the Latins; and like Romulus, he was a military king. The traditional feature of his reign was the struggle with Alba Longa. The incidents with which the legends adorn the reign of Tullus – the combat between the Roman Horatii and the Alban Curiatii for the sovereignty of Alba; the murder of his sister by the surviving Horatius; the tearing with horses of Mettius Fufius – all show the primitive and ferocious temper which the Romans themselves attributed to this age. The end of the struggle was the transference of the whole population of Alba, high and low alike, to Rome, where it was settled upon the Cælian Hill, south of the Palatine. The Alban tribal chiefs are said to have been included in the council of heads of families which we already hear of as the Roman senate. The Tullii, the Servilii, the Quintii, the Geganii, the Curiatii and the Cloelii are all named by Livy as patrician houses which now came to Rome with the Albans.

Alba Longa – itself (like Rome) a mere collection of thatched huts with no permanent fortification around it – was demolished. So fragile were its buildings that the very site of Alba,

¹ Plutarch's *Numa* is easily accessible, and is one of those lives which the Greek biographer found thoroughly sympathetic.

though known to be somewhere on the Alban mount, can no longer be identified.

The reign of Tullus closed under a cloud. Showers of stones fell upon the Alban Mount, and a loud voice was heard from the grove upon the summit. Pestilence followed; and Tullus himself fell sick. Finding a book which had belonged to Numa, he tried to carry out some of the propitiatory religious rites described in its text. Accomplishing his task with many omissions and mistakes, he deeply offended Jupiter Elicius, who with a thunderbolt burnt up the king and his house together.

This remarkable story seems to be an obscure way of telling us that the settlement of the Albans in Rome, which gave the Latin element an overwhelming majority, was deeply displeasing to the Sabine priestly colleges, who insisted in vain upon their return to Alba. The portents upon the Alban mount – whether real or imaginary – were read as the voice of the Alban gods demanding the return home of their worshippers. The worshippers dodged this by undertaking to hold the festival of the Alban gods at Alba once a year. . . . Exactly what took place between Tullus and the Sabine priest of Jupiter Elicius,¹ probably not even contemporary Romans could in all cases have told us; but it terminated with that sinister hint of the intervention of the Thunder-Father and the destruction of the king. It is difficult not to think that the Alban settlement at Rome was by agreement, and was an act of deliberate policy on the part of Tullus. The later importance of such patrician houses as the Servilian and the Quintian makes it very improbable that their first appearance at Rome was in the guise of prisoners of war.

Any suspicion we may entertain that the death of Tullus Hostilius by lightning is a technical form for describing his death at the hands of Sabine priests is strengthened by the race of his successor. Ancus Martius, the fourth king, was a Sabine, and the grandson of Numa: and he made it his aim (so Livy tells us) to return to Numa's policy and methods. But he was not able to maintain the isolation and exclusiveness which had been the characteristic features of Numa's reign.

¹ Jupiter Elicius was a Riddling God – as is clear from Plutarch's account of him. Tullus, being a Latin, and only knowing the ritual from a book, apparently became involved in some way not now ascertainable. It is by no means impossible that he became a ritual sacrificer.

Great changes were impending in Italy. Latium was feeling the pressure of a growing population upon the land available for cultivation. For some time past the Etruscan movement southward had been taking place. A new – and to Latins a startling and dazzling – civilization was spreading out of Etruria to meet the Greek civilization that was spreading north from Cumæ. The wealthy and virile Greek colonies of southern Italy represented the latest achievements of human intelligence; the powerful Etruscan cities¹ of the north were ruled by aristocracies of Asiatic origin, embodying the old, perhaps over-ripe, but wonderfully rich tradition of the eastern Mediterranean in pre-Hellenic days. Between the pressure of the two, Rome could no longer dream and tend her sheep. Smaller Latin towns were coalescing with the larger. A general segregation, a universal sharpening of social characteristics and political distinctions was turning Latium from a large number of diffused rural communities into a smaller number of definite cities, more powerful for attack or defence.

The advance of the Etruscans was from the ancient city of Cære near the sea-coast, north-west of Rome, to Veii, and thence over the Tiber at Fidenæ, and so to Gabii and Præneste. The latter city – an immensely strong natural fortress – was the centre of the new influence in Latium. The glories of Præneste under Etruscan rule, its art, its luxury, its pomp, were themselves a moral revolution to the Romans. The actual Etruscans were few in numbers – a conquering aristocracy like the Normans, who lived upon their subject populations, but did not mingle with them: but the effect of their presence and their example was immense. The new king of Rome was forced to move with the times. Like Tullus, he ended by allowing extensive settlements of new citizens at Rome. Whether or not he conquered them in war, he brought to Rome the inhabitants of the Latin city of Politorium and settled them upon the Aventine. There they were joined by migrations from Tellenæ, Ficana and Medullia. This fourth colonization meant that the

¹ The 'Etruscan League' comprised probably Tarquinii, Cære, Vetulonia, Vulci (the oldest members) Volaterræ, Populonia, Rusellæ (the northern group), Clusium, Perusia, Volsinii, Cortona and Arretium (the eastern group). From these centres Etruscan power spread to the Padus valley and south to Campania, everywhere transforming tribal into urban communities.

For the Ethnology of early Italy, see Sir William Ridgeway's account in Sandys' *Companion to Latin Studies*, Ch. I.

Roman population was now preponderantly Latin. The Sabine element had become a small minority, though by no means a despicable one. It is probable, too, that the new colonists were men whose tribal organization had from some cause – war or other – been broken up, and who settled in Rome as individual families, and became progenitors of a plebeian stock.

Although Ancus Martius is little more than a name to us, he must have been a person of considerable power and importance in his day. All his actions betray the strong perturbing influence that the Etruscan advance was creating in Latium. Besides increasing the population of the city, he extended the government of Rome down to the mouth of the Tiber, built Ostia as a port for the growing city, threw a bridge over the river opposite the Janiculum, and built a fort on the Janiculum itself as a protection against Etruscan raiders. He was a builder – the first of that mighty line which afterwards made the name of Rome so renowned.

But the Etruscans were not so easily disposed of. Unable to seize Rome by force, they entered her by stratagem; and with their advent the real history of Rome begins.

V

The Romans had plenty to say upon some aspects of the subject, and their tradition is copious and perfectly coherent and probable as far as it goes. According to their story there was a certain Greek of Corinth, called Demaratus, who for political reasons had to leave home. He settled at Tarquinii, the city in Etruria, married and had two sons, one of whom, named Lucumo, inherited the property of his father. The wealth of Lucumo enabled him to marry well. His wife, Tanaquil, was the daughter of a great Etruscan family. As Lucumo was a foreigner, and not a member of any of the old Etruscan houses, he was naturally excluded from some forms of activity. His wife keenly felt the drawback. There was, however, a feasible resort. In Rome no such restrictions hampered an enterprising man with capital. In the service of the Roman king, native descent was not an indispensable condition. Lucumo and his wife accordingly went to Rome, and acquired a Roman domicile. He registered himself under the Latin name of Lucius Tarquinius Priscus.

There is nothing in the faintest degree improbable in this, nor in the events which followed. Tarquin did what many a man before and after him has done; by assiduously making friends wheresoever he could, putting other men under friendly obligations, and keeping a lavish table, he soon rose to be a well known and trusted person. He became a personal friend and counsellor of Ancus Martius, and ended by being appointed guardian of the king's children.

As nothing is alleged to the contrary, we may conclude that Ancus Martius was the only Roman king save Numa who ever died a natural death. Tarquinius Priscus is said to have been the first man who ever canvassed for the regal dignity. He addressed the citizen electors in support of his claims, pointed out his own qualifications, and obtained their votes. He was elected without dissent the fifth king of the Romans.

This story is so sober and likely, that it would be hard to raise any objection to it. With the accession of Tarquinius Priscus the strange dawn light fades from the picture of primitive Rome, and we begin to see the city in the light of common day. Nothing prevents us from accepting the story as true. The objection to it lies rather in that for quite separate reasons we may wonder whether it is the whole truth. There may have been features in the real story which the legend does not mention. Was the action of Tarquin quite so isolated and individual as the story implies? Was he totally unconnected with the rulers of the cities of Etruria? Was he entirely dependent upon his own money? These are questions which we have no means of answering; but it would not be unreasonable to suspect that Tarquin had far more formidable support for his action than we are told by the Roman historian, and that in his campaign for election as king of Rome, as well as in his policy after election, he worked in concert with those who managed the Etruscan league.

Sabine domination in Rome ended with Tarquin, who fought vigorous Sabine wars, and extended the authority of Rome throughout old Latium, that portion of Latium which had formerly been centred round Alba. He reigned some thirty-eight years.

The reign of Tarquinius Priscus coincided with a period which was of unusual importance in the history of Mediterranean

civilization. Numa was still reigning when the Corinthians, in the year 700 B.C., built the first three-banker sea-going ship, and vastly hastened the overseas emigration of the Greeks. Etruscan expansion, as if in answer to the Greek menace, at once began. Throughout the century which lay between Numa and Tarquinius, the Greeks were pouring steadily into western waters, and the Etruscans were making ready to resist. Tarquin was still king when Massilia was founded, and Camarina and Agrigentum, and when the Laws of Solon marked an epoch in the growth of Athens. He himself, we may judge, was part of the resistance which the Etruscans were organizing against this Greek advance. His task was to consolidate Latium against the Greek power in Campania.

According to the Roman tradition, Tarquin was the man who really gave the first semblance of its later shape and substance to the city of Rome. He drained the low-lying parts of the city with permanent conduits; he marked out the first plans for the stone walls which his successor built; he instituted the Circus Maximus and introduced horse-racing and boxing; he levelled and built up the foundations for the great temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. He had vowed it during the Sabine War; and the Thunder-Father had sent the luck to his new Etruscan disciple rather than to his old Sabine followers; and the Etruscan prepared to repay his debt. From the size and strength of the foundations, it was clear that Tarquinius entertained some intelligent anticipations concerning the future of Rome.

He had not brought Etruscan gods to his new domicile. Even the practice of 'taking the auspices' and the official establishment of the College of Augurs—religious customs which the Etruscans had first introduced into Italy—had found their way into Rome long before Tarquinius Priscus. The priestly colleges—the 'Luperci,' the 'Salii,' the Arval Brotherhood, the Guild of Pontifices which had charge of the bridge—were all older than the political supremacy of the Etruscans. The Pontifex Maximus, the head of the Pontifices, had perhaps not yet risen to be the director and controller of official Roman religion, the referee and final court of appeal for all religious questions; but nearly all the substance of Roman religion was there. Tarquin proposed to act upon the spiritual powers already enshrined in the place.

His choice of the Capitoline Jupiter as the great presiding deity of Rome has many points of interest; but the chief interest it has for us, at this place, is its revelation of the fact that Rome passed into Etruscan hands from those of the Sabines.

The thirty-eight years of his reign hardly diminished the hope of the Sabines that they might yet return to power: but those years had destroyed the possibility that they ever could do so. Tarquinius fell to a conspiracy instigated by the sons of Ancus Marcius. The assassins were caught before they could escape; the queen Tanaquil ordered the doors to be locked; and locked for some days they remained.

VI

While Rome waited, awe-struck, upon the news of Tarquin, the king's son-in-law, Servius Tullius, conducted the business of state. Not until all the machinery of government had been effectively brought under his control was the truth revealed. Tarquinius Priscus was dead. Servius Tullius was the first king of Rome who occupied the throne without formal election.

This is as we might expect it to be, if Tarquin had been no isolated individual, but a man working in conjunction with the Etruscan leaders. The Etruscans had no intention of allowing their firm grasp to slip from Rome. Servius was a man who had been carefully chosen by Tarquin, educated and trained in the methods and the ideals which characterized the new government, and married to Tarquin's daughter. He was a man without associations. His mother had been a prisoner of war captured in the storming of the city of Corniculum.¹ The queen Tanaquil had recognized her as the wife of the chief of Corniculum; and her son, born after the event, had been a special protégé of Tarquin. He proved to be just what the king needed; an able man, perfectly susceptible of education, but an isolated individual entirely unconnected with any tribe, house or family which might be an inconvenient bond. Servius carried on the policy of Tarquin without interruption. What Tarquin had planned, Servius completed.

It was to Servius that the Romans of later ages attributed the first census, and to him they attributed that remarkable work which was based upon it – the classification of the Roman people.

¹ On the high ground north of Tibur.

Some hundred and fifty years or thereabouts had passed since the Spartans had given to the world one of its epoch-making inventions – the Hoplite System – the phalanx of armoured pikemen moving in disciplined unison. With this instrument the Greek cities were destined to establish the political liberty of Hellas, to destroy all the forces that came against it, and finally, under Alexander, to overthrow the Persian power and to carry Greek civilization into the very heart of Asia. When Servius came to the kingship of Rome the invention was still fairly new, and its great triumphs were still in the future. Every progressive state which hoped for prosperity and power was busy copying the system. Servius introduced it into Rome.

Hitherto, the Roman system had been of the type which we see illustrated in the *Iliad*: a purely aristocratic system in which the heavy fighting was done by picked champions like Achilles or Ajax, on whose equipment all the available resources were spent – and who were followed into battle by an imperfectly armed and trained mob of tribesmen. In a primitive state of society, in which equipment is difficult to procure, there are advantages in this system of concentration. But civilization in Latium was increasing; agriculture was expanding; more land was coming into cultivation; productivity was greater; and it was possible for a larger number of persons to provide themselves with equipment. The policy of the Etruscans was to encourage this growth of prosperity. The growing concentration of population into the urban districts created a mentality which was capable of learning discipline. The daily association which is characteristic of town life made men acquainted with one another, and able to combine together. The new Greek hoplite tactics were townsmen's tactics. Yet another factor was all in favour of the new system. It could be operated with success by the ordinary person. No Ajaxes were required. The average man – especially the average man of a vigorous type like the Latin – clothed in armour, and moving in step to the sound of music, could develop a mass-power before which an army of Ajaxes was helpless. This mass-power, this force developed by simultaneous action, was the secret of the success of the hoplite system.

The value of Rome to the Etruscans lay then in that Rome

possessed a great population of ordinary men available for use in the phalanx. The old system had found no use for these men. They were now surveyed and registered, their property qualifications ascertained, and their persons classified.¹ The two first groups were of those who could not only provide an equipment, but a horse. The third class were the hoplites proper – the armoured pikemen of the infantry phalanx. The fourth class were the men who could afford a light equipment suitable for scouts and skirmishers. By this means the new Etruscan kings of Rome came into the possession of a powerful instrument for securing the control of Latium, and holding the line of the Tiber.

VII

To Servius also is attributed the fortification of Rome. He transformed the old aggregate of villages into a single city. Not only the Septimontium, but the Sabine villages on the Quirinal and the Viminal, the Capitoline Hill, and (according to the Roman tradition) the Aventine,² where the new Latin colonists lived, were all, for the first time, included within a stone wall. In the place of the old component villages, the city was divided into four wards – divisions of which we shall presently hear more. The first census is said to have shown a register of eighty thousand citizens qualified to bear arms.

Servius, by traditional repute, was a diplomatist rather than a fighting-man. As the head of this new and powerful city on the Tiber, with its walls and its organized force of citizen-soldiers, he did his best by sympathy, tact and appreciation to induce the Latin cities to acknowledge the friendly hegemony of Rome. He persuaded them to take the great step which amounted to the public acknowledgement of Roman leadership; they joined with him in building a great temple dedicated to Diana upon the Aventine, as the centre of the common brotherhood of Latin cities.

For forty-four years (so they say) Servius reigned over Rome. The story of his fall, as told by Livy, is one of those stories out of which Shakespeare might have quarried material for *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and *King Lear*: the story of a daughter's ambition

¹ Botsford, *Roman Assemblies*, pp. 69–76.

² This inclusion of the Aventine is questioned by some modern historians.

and jealousy, of crime, terror, hatred and overwhelming tragedy. And – as Livy tells the tale – the details of this tragedy are a real and integral part of Roman history. The subsequent hatred and fear which the Romans felt for kings was not – by their own account – a purely political emotion: it was based upon a number of events of a nature particularly repulsive to the Roman mind, and especially abhorrent to its moral code.

Servius had married his two daughters to the sons of Tarquinius Priscus. It was the younger daughter who spun the mischief. Finding that she could not inspire her husband with her own view of their importance, she transferred her hand and heart to her sister's husband, who bore a little more likeness to herself. She and Lucius Tarquin both of them murdered their partners, and then, with the permission rather than the approval of Servius, married one another.

From this point onwards, the Furies had their will with Tullia. She egged her new husband on to a treason all the blacker because it was not very willing on his part, and it was directed against her own father.

As soon as Lucius Tarquin had received a sufficient number of secret promises of support, he took the startling step of convoking a meeting of the senate in his own name, as king. The senators, having had no opportunity of consulting one another beforehand, were only anxious to side with whichever was the winning side: and this, at the moment, appeared to be Lucius Tarquin. The appearance of Servius himself upon the scene led to violence. The king was thrown down the steps of the senate-house, and was overtaken and slain by emissaries of Lucius Tarquin before he could reach his own house again. His daughter had already driven down to the senate-house to be the first to salute her husband as king. On her return she saw the body of her father lying in the street at the foot of the Esquiline: and she ordered her driver to drive over it.

All ages and periods have their prejudices in matters of morality; and this conduct of Tullia, which to modern taste is only a shocking brutality was, to a Roman, a blasphemy before which earth trembled, and the very gods grew pale. The result (which was exactly the same, whether the story be true or false) was to annihilate the moral claim of Lucius Tarquin to the throne through his wife. If the story was an invention, it

was invented by an ingenious thinker who saw exactly how to plant in the Roman mind a conviction that Lucius Tarquin had no claim to call himself the rightful successor to Servius.

VIII

The accession of Lucius Tarquin – Tarquinius Superbus – Tarquin the Proud – was a revolution carried out by force and sustained by a reign of terror. He ruled through those same *Celeres* which are reputed to have been the foundation of the power of Romulus – the same instrument by which the government of Dionysius of Syracuse and all the great Greek tyrants was supported. He had not been elected by the Romans, and he did not rule with the consent of the senate, nor consult its opinion. His was a personal and an unconstitutional government; he himself sat in the high court of justice, so that its proceedings could be accommodated to his general policy: he decided upon peace and war, arranged and signed treaties, made alliances, and conducted all the business of state. He paid particular attention to the repression of the old clan-chiefs who remembered and regretted the constitutional methods of earlier Rome. For this he had a reason which the Roman tradition itself admits – that is to say, his policy was not a Roman policy but a Latin policy. He aimed at a united Latium, and by every shift that ingenuity could suggest, by force, fraud, conciliation, persuasion and appeal to tradition, he brought into being a league which amounted to a real Roman hegemony in place of the equal alliance which had been enough for Servius. In the process, it was often necessary to break the power of the local leaders who were unable to understand any but a policy of local aggrandisement: and the Roman tribesmen shared in a fate which befel those of Gabii and Aricia also.

Even in the dark story which the Romans themselves told, a very little shifting of the emphasis brings Tarquinius Superbus out into relief as one of those brilliant and remorseless statesmen who from time to time astonish and scandalise us in Italian history. So seen, he appears as an Italian patriot, a prominent member of the Etruscan brotherhood, who aimed at stemming the tide of Greek advance and at building a barrier against it that should not be washed away. As such, he was a

successful man. He came to the throne, according to the Roman reckoning, in the very year in which the combined Carthaginian and Etruscan fleets fought the Greeks to a standstill at Alalia in Corsica. This battle – one of the turning-points in ancient history – checked for ever the expansion of the Greeks in the western Mediterranean. Tarquin the Proud was the man who barred the Greek advance northwards on the Italian mainland. His federation of Latin cities implied that Greek power would never cross the borders of Campania. This was the justification for the stern domestic policy which the Romans found it so hard to understand – the ferocity, the deceit, the treacherous courtesies, the stern calculation which so repelled them.

It is not recorded that he had any share in that great siege of Cumæ, in the year 524 B.C., which failed to dislodge the Greeks from their hold on southern Italy. The height of Etruscan power was marked that year. With their secure possession of Etruria, their settlement of the Padus valley, their conquest of Corsica, their domination in Latium and their entry into Campania, the Etruscans might have seemed well on the way to supremacy in Italy. They broke down because they were too few, and because the local powers which they repressed were harder and stronger in substance than their own imperial power. With the failure of the great siege of Cumæ the prestige of Etruscan supremacy began to wane. In Latium it sank and vanished as quickly as it had arisen.

IX

According to the Roman tradition, Tarquinius was at Ardea when the events began which were to unseat him, and which were then, step by step, to bring down the fabric of Etruscan power. The tale tells nothing of Cumæ, nothing of the struggle with the Greeks; it burns with an intense, a blind absorption in the affairs of Rome. The men who handed it down to posterity had no interest in the larger issues of Latin federation or Italian patriotism.

It begins with the wine-party at which Collatinus and Sextus Tarquinius were present; the reminiscences in which they indulged concerning their absent wives; the warm tribute each paid to his own; the argument that broke out, which was

settled by the suggestion of Collatinus that they should mount their horses then and there, and should set off to Collatia to prove by actual test what their wives were doing. They found the wives of the three Tarquins enjoying themselves with parties of friends; but the wife of Collatinus, the lovely Lucretia, was at work with her maids around her, in the decorous quiet of her own home. She welcomed them, and the party stayed the night as guests of Collatinus.

A few days afterwards Collatinus, riding to Collatia from Ardea, in company with Lucius Junius Brutus, the captain of the royal guard, was met by a message from his wife calling him urgently home. He found his father-in-law, Spurius Lucretius, and a friend named Publius Valerius also present as witnesses. In their presence Lucretia told that famous story of the return of Sextus Tarquinius, his midnight visit, the sword and the threat he held over her, the violence he effected. She pledged all those who were present to exact the uttermost vengeance; and then she stabbed herself and died at their feet.

The modern English reader too often forgets that the ancient Romans were Italians, and in both their life and their art were liable to degrees of passion and impulse rare in the north European. If the story of the Rape of Lucretia be false, it was at any rate forged by an artist who knew his countrymen. To any Roman who actually faced such a crisis, the events which followed were as natural as life. Lucius Brutus himself, the chief of the guard, the man who, in later ages, would have been called Prætorian Prefect – Brutus drew out that knife, and holding it before him, with Lucretia's blood draining from its point, swore the great and binding oath to destroy Lucius Tarquinius Superbus with all his kith and kin, by fire and sword and every other means possible, and to allow neither them nor any other man to reign as king in Rome. Collatinus and Lucretius, with their friend Valerius, took the same oath. The body of Lucretia was carried down to the Forum. Then followed the crowd, the speeches, the tears, the violent emotion and the armed revolt. The insurgents marched upon Rome and raised the city. The Romans were ripe for change. The plebs were tired of forced labour; the *patres* were tired of Etruscan politics. Lucius Tarquin, hurrying to Rome to deal with the outbreak, found the city gates shut against him. He

had only time to fly to Cære. Brutus had raised in revolt the army at Ardea, and the rule of the kings was at an end. . . . This happened, the Romans said, in the two hundred and forty-fourth year of the city; the year which we call 509 B.C. . . . In this way collapsed the great fabric of Etruscan rule in Latium.

Exactly how much of this story is true is a problem beyond our power to solve. Quite easily it may be wholly true. The rape of Lucretia may have been the incident which gave rise to a general rebellion; but we must remember that even by the Roman account the impulse did not originate in Rome, but at Collatia and Ardea, and among the close kindred and officers of Tarquin. The Latin cities led the way, and Rome followed. That the result was general, we can see by the king's flight out of Latium into Etruria. Moreover, the revolt was not unpremeditated. The men who led it had already concerted their policy. The government of the king, elected for life, was replaced by the government of two magistrates called prætors or consuls, elected for one year only. They were elected, not by the old general assembly of the curies which had elected the kings – although the last two kings had dispensed with its assistance – but by the new assembly of the centuries, the assembly of the hoplite army, with its carefully graduated property qualifications. The Assembly of the Centuries was, in fact, the power which supplanted the kings, and the hoplite army was the force which backed its decision. Servius, in organizing the new army, had created a power which could act in unison for political as well as for military purposes – and it proceeded to do so. The republic, the Constitutional State, started its career on the principle that political power should be in the hands of the men who paid for its defence in blood and equipment. Patricians and plebeians stood shoulder to shoulder in the hoplite army, and in the political assembly of the centuries. No distinctions of caste had any importance; the qualification was one of property only.

The first task of the new state was to prove its ability to survive the counter-attacks levelled against it. Vigorous efforts were made by the Etruscans to recover their power in Latium. Conspiracy was the first natural resort. The secret royalists were betrayed, and though the sons of Junius Brutus were among them, their father passed their death-warrant with

stern impartiality; and witnessed their execution not indeed unmoved, but unrelenting. This having failed, force was tried. With armies from the Etruscan cities of Tarquinii and Veii, Lucius Tarquin fought a pitched battle against the republican forces of Rome, and the Romans themselves admit that it was a level fight. The king, however, retired and sought fresh help, this time from the powerful Lars Porsena of Clusium, a statesman of his own type.

The struggle of republican Rome against Porsena was a political as well as a military struggle. The new rulers of Rome took every possible means to unite all ranks and classes in one universal feeling of common interest. In order to keep the cost of food within reasonable limits, the government controlled the supply of corn; salt, which had been exploited by private enterprise, was made a government monopoly. The war-taxation was entirely shouldered by the wealthier classes. The result of these measures was zeal and enthusiasm among the poorest on behalf of the new system.

A glamour of heroic legend always clung to the memory of the struggle with Porsena. The defence of the old Sublician bridge by the immortal three, Horatius, Herminius and Spurius Lartius; the swimming of the Tiber by Horatius in full armour; the attempt of Scævola to assassinate Porsena; the adventures of the girl Clœlia – all these register the political zeal which swept human beings away in its irresistible torrent. Republican Rome had a remarkable habit of honouring her great enemies. To the great figures of Pyrrhus and Hannibal we shall come presently. Of Porsena, the earliest, we are given no monstrous or horrifying portrait; he was never a bogey man to frighten the bad children of Rome. We hear only that he was a very august, a very chivalrous man, against whom even republican enthusiasts had no evil to bring.

The Romans themselves were not quite sure how Porsena's siege of Rome terminated. That he took Rome, they did not admit; and according to our information, Rome went on governing herself in independence. No royalist restoration took place. The overwhelming probability is that Rome was captured, her walls partly dismantled, and her citizens forbidden for the future to bear arms; and Porsena might have carried his arms into the heart of Latium had not Aristodemus, the Greek

ruler of Cumæ, marched north in force with the purpose of preventing the reconquest of the country by the Etruscans. His expedition was welcomed as an army of deliverance. In a battle fought at Aricia the Greeks and the revolted Latins were successful against the Etruscans. Porsena withdrew his armies, while Aristodemus carried his laurels back to Cumæ, leaving Rome and the Latin cities to arrange their own affairs as best they liked. The intervention of Aristodemus was decisive. No further attempt was ever made to force an Etruscan king upon the Latin people. Rome was free.

X

Freedom has its penalties and its difficulties. The new governors of Rome, for all their enthusiasm, hardly knew how to fill that splendid material shell which the Etruscan kings had bequeathed to them. The policy of the Tarquins had made Rome a great and a populous centre, in which an intensive agriculture fed a large population of merchants, craftsmen, soldiers and indirect producers. That was the age in which were carried out the great agricultural works that so astonish the modern archæologist. All through the northern and the western parts of Latium the forest had been cleared and the rich soil brought into cultivation. The land had been terraced, drained, irrigated, according to its requirements; the water was directed whither it was wanted by stone-built dams and underground channels: the ground was worked and planted and tended by careful labour with spade and mattock and hoe, as well as plough. The capital sunk in the land must have been enormous – it still remains far beyond any that has been devoted to the same purposes since. Etruscan Latium was no backward country. The commerce which had flowed through Latium – that is to say, mainly through Rome, its head – was in proportion. Traces of the products of all the lands of the Mediterranean basin are found in the tombs of that age. This was the prize at which the Roman tribesmen had snatched when they expelled the kings. They now had the control of the great machine of production which the Etruscan kings had created. Their first use of it had been to resist the return of the men who created it. What after that?

The productivity of Latium was due to two causes – the

fertilizing effect of the old volcanic elements in the soil, and the organization of the country in large estates. The old tribal lands, managed on a large scale by the *patres*, had led the way; and the private possessions of the kings and their followers had been modelled upon the same plan. A large estate, with a great turnover and a central direction, can apply capital to the furtherance of production on a scale which can never be attained by small peasant holdings: and this had been the Etruscan secret. Could the *patres* continue a system which owed its origin to the dictatorship of the Etruscan kings? Could they maintain it while the Latin League fell apart into independent units?

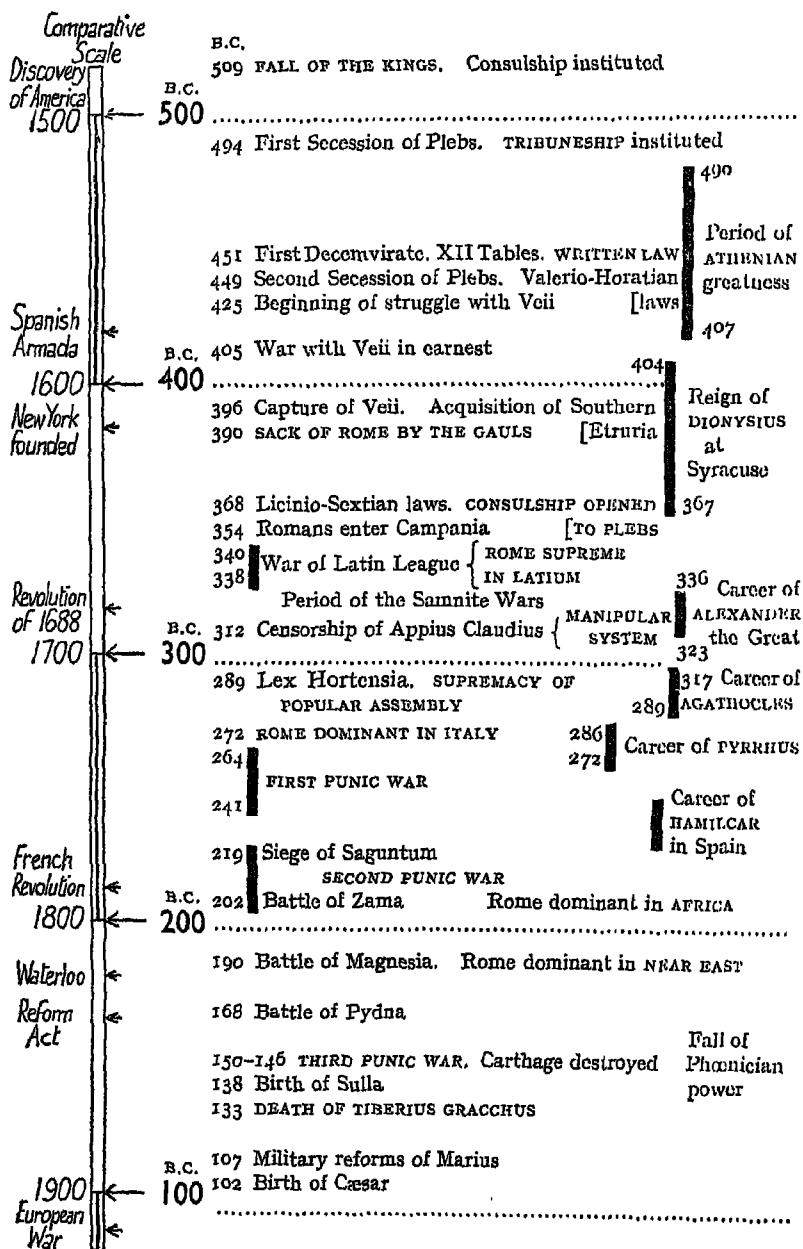
Logically, Rome could hardly deny to the Latin cities the absolute independence she claimed for herself; but logic is not always a cheap virtue. The economic prosperity of Latium depended so much upon the maintenance of the League, and that of Rome so much upon her position as head of the League, that the *patres* decided to step into the shoes of the kings. The battle of Lake Regillus showed them that they were not yet able to aspire so high. It was followed by the Treaty of Spurius Cassius. The League was reconstituted on a basis of common status, Rome sharing in it on equal terms with all other cities.

The treaty was hastened by a more serious event. The plebeians had been full of zeal for the abolition of kings. They had appreciated the action of the patricians in shouldering all the taxes. Now they began to find that the new government was attended by practical inconveniences for which they were not prepared. With war, falling productivity and interrupted trade, many of them needed to borrow to keep going. They found in the courts of law no longer an indulgent king and his deputies with a politic suspicion of rich men, but zealous aristocrats animated by a strong dislike of people who tried to avoid the fulfilment of contracts. Many of the plebeians became permanently liable to pay the whole of their income to their creditors.¹ In such circumstances the zeal of idealists tends to cool with inconvenient rapidity. There were refusals

¹ If the working classes of Great Britain were legally liable to repay the whole of the amount they have received in unemployment benefit since 1920, their position would resemble that of the plebeians.

SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(THE AGE OF EXPANSION)



of military service. Men said frankly that they would not serve if bankruptcy were the penalty of serving.

The crisis which ensued was a far more severe test for the *patres* than war had been. It was, in addition, their first test. They had not yet the long tradition of political skill which afterwards distinguished them. There were serious differences of opinions in their own ranks. Some of the sterner spirits believed severity to be the wisest course. Others took a shrewder view. The situation was at last solved by the action of the plebeians themselves. The plebeian members of the legions, in their military array, marched out of the city, entrenched themselves on a hill near the Anio, and waited upon the decision of the *patres*.

They waited for several days in perfect order and discipline. At the end of that time the *patres* surrendered. It was no use trying to carry on the state on terms of mutual hatred and animosity. The first rule of politics is harmony. The compromise which was then arranged was a remarkable one. The plebs were granted a bench of officers to be elected by themselves from their own ranks, who should have authority to forbid any action whatsoever which they considered to be unjust to the plebeians. Their power was negative – it was a power to prohibit, not to command. This was the famous Tribuneship of the Plebs.¹ The first two tribunes are said to have been Gaius Licinius and Lucius Albinus.

With the creation of the tribunician power the Roman Constitutional State was at last launched upon its career, and we can follow, step by step, the momentous events and surprising results which were produced by the interaction of the human forces which it embodied.

¹ A Tribune was a *Ward Leader* – the chairman, president, representative, delegate or headman of a municipal district, or of all the districts. From this original meaning all the various uses of the word seem to have derived. The earliest Tribunes were the leaders of their Ward contingents to the military levy, so that down to late times the legionary commanders were known as 'Military Tribunes' long after their connection with the wards had ceased. Such Tribunes with consular authority added, were the 'Consular Tribunes' referred to in Ch. II, §viii. The Tribunes of the Plebs were representatives of all the wards. The Tribunes of the Treasury (*Tribuni Aerarii*) were the Ward Treasurers, or men qualified to hold office as such. See the article 'Tribunus' in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*.

CHAPTER II

THE TRIBUNES OF THE PLEBS, THE CREATION OF THE REIGN OF LAW, AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE QUINTIAN HOUSE (494 B.C. – 396 B.C.)

I

The creation of the bench of Tribunes of the Plebs was tantamount to the creation of the Plebs as a political force. Hitherto they had been a collection of persons whose presence in Rome was merely tolerated. They had been useful to the community, although but perfunctorily associated as a part of it. By the constitution of Servius they had been called upon to serve the state in the armoured phalanx, and had been enrolled in the 'centuries' of the Assembly, where, owing to the system of classification, they were always out-voted by the patrician tribesmen. But now they faced the patricians, the tribesmen, on something much more like level terms. The plebeians represented that miscellaneous section of the populace of Rome whose claim to citizenship depended not upon their descent from some ancestor, but upon their services to the community: and now they had acquired official representatives to speak on their behalf.

The Roman State only came into its full being when the plebs obtained recognition. That power which we call the State, as distinct from tribal institutions, arbitrary despotism or private association, begins when the various powers of the community first meet in conference and determine a common policy. The political development of Rome, which proceeded step by step with her expansion in size and population, consisted in the discovery of methods by which the purposes and the services of every section of the community could be mirrored and represented in her collective actions. The State is in its essence a composite body. It only exists when at least two

independent social forces agree to act in systematic concord. It is a treaty of peace, a pact between social bodies which are independent, and in most cases have been mutually hostile. It grows as these social forces multiply. In the case of Rome it reached its highest growth when, in addition to the tribal councils and the priestly colleges, standing ground was also given to the mercantile fraternities and the voluntary associations of artisans and peasants. There was at first hardly more coherence between these bodies than there is now between the members of the League of Nations. The political state begins as a league, a treaty, a compromise, a discontented and grudging admission of other men's points of view. From this beginning it develops.

II

The apprehensions which led the patricians to compromise over the tribuneship of the plebs were proved to be justifiable in the years that followed. The establishment of the republic was accompanied by diminished production and frequent economic distress, and by the outbreak of more than one disastrous pestilence in Latium. Not all the remedies suggested were acceptable to the persons involved. A certain amount of emigration to the colonies of Velitræ and Norba was not enough to put matters right. The programme of relief brought forward by Spurius Cassius, involving the resumption of land-leases that had been granted by the State, and a policy of allotments to the plebs, caused strong opposition, and resulted in his fall. The proposals did not please the patricians, and failed to arouse the enthusiasm of the plebeians. The tribunes took up the problem and forced it upon the attention of the government. They soon found by experiment that by using their veto to prohibit the military levy they could bring to heel the patrician executive magistrates, who dared not stand by and passively see their own agricultural land plundered by outside raiders. Repeated military mutinies by the citizen troops achieved a similar end. In the political struggle which took place intense feeling was shown, and both sides displayed the stubborn resolution which in later years was to strike the world as a typically Roman quality; but one other Roman quality the contestants also showed – they fought their battle strictly by

the legal rules. They must sometimes have been exasperated with one another past all bounds: but no blow is recorded as having been struck, and no violence was employed. With the patience of men playing an unfamiliar game they played to the rules, learning as they played.

If circumstantial evidence count for anything, it is fairly certain that there can be no truth in the idea that the patricians exercised a brutal tyranny over the plebeians. The allegation or the insinuation that they did so is in all probability a reflection back of the conditions of the Gracchan age and its parties. Bitter quarrels leave a deep mark on succeeding ages, and the Gracchan quarrels did leave such a mark, visible until the days of Diocletian. But the strife of patrician and plebeian left no scar. The quarrel healed clean, without mark. And the principal reason for this was that on the whole the patricians observed the recognized moral code of their day and their country. Those of whom we actually know something in detail were none of them brutal or tyrannous. As far as we can trace their characters and conduct they were sometimes rugged, but were often enlightened in their attitude, and surprisingly sympathetic and conciliatory towards their opponents.

The reason why they clung with such tenacity to their land system was a sound one. With a falling productivity they were anxious to maintain the system of large estates which had first enabled capital to be sunk in improvements. Year after year the tribunes brought up afresh a programme of measures based upon the proposals of Spurius Cassius. These measures, once passed, would have tended to break up the estates, and to destroy the possibility of central directive policies on a large scale. The plebeian peasants, who thought only of the immediate problem, would find themselves saddled with small plots which they could not improve, and indeed could scarcely maintain at the old level of fertility, both from want of capital and because of the impossibility of applying it to small properties. They would either end by selling badly depreciated property back to its old owners or they would find themselves where they began – in the hands of the mortgagees. Against this prospect the patricians held out with the obduracy of Romans. Year after year, by one expedient or another, they wrecked the

attempt to pass the agrarian laws. When they offered the newly conquered land of Antium for division among the plebeians, the latter did not want it, but wanted land near Rome. As a consequence nothing was done to remedy the real evil, and the trouble increased.

III

Gradually the contest between the patricians and the plebeians, the gentile and the political elements in Rome, came to assume the form of a struggle between the consulship and the tribunate. The problem which arose was : — What was to be the end of a contest in which the patrician consuls had an unlimited power of command and the plebeian tribunes an unlimited power of veto? The answer was, of course, that one of the two powers must be limited. . . . This was much easier said than done. Of the two, the tribunician power gained the advantage. The plebeians strengthened their position by securing that the election of their representatives should be removed from the old, semi-tribal curiate assembly (*comitia curiata*) — in which the patrician influence was still powerful — and entrusted to the Ward Assembly (*comitia tributa*) — a much more democratic and independent electorate. Such passions were aroused by this step that at one point bloodshed was only averted by the interposition of the second consul, T. Quintius, and the more responsible senators, who restrained his fire-eating colleague Appius Claudius from going to extremes. The culmination of the struggle came when Appius was impeached by the tribunes for general conduct injurious to the welfare of the state. The old gentleman was quite defiant and unrepentant, and a vigorous tussle seemed to be in prospect; but he died before the case could be finally decided, leaving the issue unsettled.

No further attempt was made to reach a decision upon these lines. The tribunes may have recognized that they had little to gain by victory and much to lose by defeat. After a pause, a fresh idea was put forward by the tribune G. Terentilius Harsa. He proposed that the powers of the consuls should be stated and defined by law. Hitherto they had simply possessed the regal power as it had been exercised by such kings as Servius, with just as much modification as might be effected

by causing the holders of this power to be two in number, annually elected, and responsible to the law after they had laid down their office. Considerable as the modification was, it was a purely practical one; it restrained certain sorts of misuse of power, but it did not in any way define the power, which remained a matter of custom and tradition. This was the point at which Terentilius Harsa levelled his attack. He proposed to ask for a definition in writing, which would remain on record.

The indignation of the patricians at this proposal may surprise a modern reader, but their concern was by no means unreasonable. To change law from a traditional or customary to a written basis involved changes in the nature and structure of the state quite as great in magnitude as those effected by the expulsion of the kings or the creation of the tribunes, and very damaging to patrician rights. But it had this peculiar quality about it, which made it extraordinarily difficult to resist – it was in keeping with the progress of events. Year by year, the whole current of Roman life was setting towards one distant but definite objective: the constitutional state. To fight that invisible current was to contend with an irresistible force: to go with it was to overcome all obstacles. The very fact that the government of Rome was now becoming a political state of a complex and composite nature made the prospect of a written law imminent and desirable. Up to this moment the State, as such, hardly possessed any law of its own.

But the possibility of conducting a political state so that it shall be a strong, stable, practical system of organization, depends upon the establishment of a body of agreed rules and regulations which are enforced by the state itself. When the Roman state was first formed, its various component elements already possessed old-established rules and regulations of their own; and in some cases the state enforced these rules for want of anything better; but until the time came when the state itself began to establish a law binding upon all the persons within its boundaries, it could not be considered an adequate organization. Hence the establishment of a common law, a general law, was the action by which the political state entered upon its heritage and proved itself of full growth. As law grew, expanded, solidified, and took on coherence and strength and

rationality, so the state was destined to widen, deepen and become a force capable of resisting its foes, surviving its friends, and destroying its oppressors. The power of a state is only the outward and visible measure of the excellence of its law.

We have the testimony of the jurists that the earliest Roman law was traditional customary law. Of this kind of unwritten law, orally preserved and communicated to the public by the heads of the aristocratic houses, we have plentiful examples in all ages, and it still survives in various parts of the world. Perhaps the most vivid description, which leaves the most lasting impression on the mind of any one who reads it, is contained in the famous Icelandic saga of *Njal*, where we have a detailed description of just how a traditional customary law works in practice – and particularly (for the present purpose) just where it is liable to irritate those who are subject to it. Any one who has read the story of the great lawyer *Njal*, and has realized the nature of the obstacles and difficulties over which his learning helped his friends, is qualified to take a sympathetic interest in the early struggles of the Roman plebs to destroy the system.¹ The Roman gentile tribesmen

¹ *Njal's Saga* is readily accessible in Sir G. Dasent's famous translation, *Burnt Njal*. See, e.g. Chapter 120 and the following chapters: also Chapter 140, notice of a charge of murder, and Eyjolf Bolverkr's son's expedient for obstructing the charge; Chapter 141, the formulation of the charge, the empanelling of the jurors, the challenge to two of these by the defendants, so that the case is brought to nothing; the dodging of this challenge by the plaintiffs, on the score that it was wrongly grounded, so that the case is saved and can proceed. Then the defendants repeat the challenge on the ground that the two persons are lodgers, not householders; but the plaintiffs prove that the two persons possess chattels within the requirement of the law. Eyjolf does not know if this is good law, so they send to Skapti the Law-Speaker, who says that it is correct, 'though few know it.' Then Eyjolf objects to four jurors on the technical ground that other men were nearer neighbours to the crime; but the prosecution dodge this by claiming that the objection does not dismiss the action but only involves them in a fine for each man wrongly summoned. Again Eyjolf has to send to Skapti, who again endorses it as correct, though he thought that only he and *Njal* knew it. The remaining jurors then formally declare their verdict of guilty against Flosi. Chapter 142 – Eyjolf then pleads that the case has been brought in the wrong court. Chapter 143 – the plaintiffs then appeal to the fifth court on the ground that Flosi has paid a fee to Eyjolf; and the whole case is dismissed because the plaintiffs, after withdrawing six jurors, call on the defendants to withdraw six, and the latter do not; and then, instead of calling them out themselves they (the plaintiffs) ask for judgment in their favour, and their case is at once rejected. Chapter 144 – battle follows (no wonder!) and then peace is made and the atonements settled by arbitration. It is a pity that they did not begin where they ended!

who were its exponents did not uphold it for any malicious reasons. They had no complaints to make about it. It worked adequately for them. But the system had incurable defects when it was employed as a common law, a law of the State,¹ and when it was applied to men who did not know it and could not work it. The time had clearly come to replace this old type of law by a new kind which would work adequately for all classes of the community.

IV

This was the strength of the new proposal. As soon as Terentilius Harsa had made it, he started a train of ideas which could have but one consequence. Obstructed on its first introduction, the proposal was again brought forward; the tribunes placed it in the forefront of their business, and prepared to push it through.

To the patricians, it seemed to endanger the whole basis on which their mode of life was conducted. The patrician world was one of personal association and personal relationship; nothing abstract and impersonal ever intruded into it. To be tied to a system of written rules and regulations, leaving no scope for personal discretion, for equity, for all those stern or tender modifications which circumstances might call for – a system which closed the mouth of the pater familias and silenced his solemn ancestral authority: this appalled and revolted the patrician. His feelings on this score were not alleviated when he was indeed assured by some rude tribune that this personal discretion and solemn ancestral authority were exactly what every one was anxious to get rid of.

The opposition was at first led by Cæso Quintius. Under his leadership there was a certain amount of disorder which gave the tribunes their opportunity. Cæso was impeached, and in spite of all the efforts of his friends was condemned for abetting murder. Perhaps wisely, he forfeited his bail and bolted for Etruria. His father, old L. Quintius Cincinnatus, had to sell most of his property in order to make good the loss to the ten sureties who had furnished the bail. The patricians, however, continued to carry on a determined and clever propaganda against the proposals of Terentilius. They were

¹ Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, pp. 86–87.

countered by a series of extraordinary charges and incidents which the tribunes brought up against them.

According to the tribunes,¹ the fugitive Cæso, after absconding from bail, was now secretly back in Rome, and his presence was being concealed by his friends, who were making plans for a *coup d'état*, the murder of the bench of tribunes, and a reversion to the political conditions which had existed prior to the institution of the tribuneship. What was more, on the eve of the Assembly called to vote upon the Terentilian bill, some kind of attempted violence actually did take place. The Capitol and Citadel were seized by the political refugees, assisted by some slaves – presumably their own. Appius Herdonius the Sabine, who was the nominal leader, summoned the slaves – that is to say, the bankrupts enslaved for debt – to rise and secure their liberty. This, perhaps, was a tactical mistake. At all events the consuls (who were of course patricians and trusted members of their own order) took the episode seriously, and summoned all good citizens to aid in public defence.

The tribunes implored the electors not to be deceived. The gentlemen on the Capitol were (they said) of the patrician party, and they were there solely for the purpose of preventing the Assembly from passing the business before it. While the raiders remained in possession, therefore, a remarkable scene took place down below in the Forum, where the patrician consuls exhorted the electors to take the *coup d'état* seriously, while the plebeian tribunes ridiculed it as a mere pretence staged for ulterior purposes by their opponents. Dusk fell before the dispute could be settled: the electors went home – some to bed, some to sit up – and during the night news of the occurrence spread in every direction. It reached the city of Tusculum, where the leading citizen, L. Mamilius, immediately summoned a meeting. He pointed out to his fellow-citizens the serious danger in which Rome stood, and the magnificent opportunity which had arrived for conferring upon the Romans an obligation which might prove very profitable in the long run for Tusculum. They saw the point at once. Before morning, a strong force of Tusculans had set out for Rome, to

¹ Livy III, xv, while Dionysius gives us a variant which seems to be the same story told from the patrician point of view, depicting the allegations as invented for purposes of political propaganda by the tribunes.

rescue her from the red jaws of revolution. Their appearance created a temporary panic in Rome. As soon, however, as the benevolent rescuers had explained their errand, they were welcomed. Their presence stilled the domestic dispute. The consuls were now committed to the repression of the attempted revolution. No one could say that they had been prevented by the general indifference. The objections of the tribunes became useless now that the Tuscians had arrived. Ultimately the whole affair was arranged by a typical compromise. The consul P. Valerius agreed that if the plebeians would support him against the raiders on the Capitol, he on his part would guarantee the holding of an Assembly to deal with the Terentilian proposals. On the strength of this, the electors fell into their military categories, the Capitol was taken by assault, and the surviving raiders were handed over to be dealt with by the law.

So far, this was satisfactory. The least pleasing feature of the episode was that P. Valerius, who gave the undertaking, was killed during the fighting. When the tribunes asked that the undertaking which had been given should be carried out, the surviving consul explained that he must first attend to the election of a new colleague. His attitude could scarcely be objected to, since the dual nature of the consular office was an integral part of it, and a magistrate who acted without a colleague might involve himself in some unpleasant consequences. But the result was interesting. After a vigorous electoral campaign, in which the patricians exerted all their influence, the new consul was announced. He was L. Quintius Cincinnatus, the father of Cæso !

v

If the seizure of the Capitol was a pretence, staged for ulterior purposes by cunning propagandists, at least no one can now discover which of the contending parties staged it. The first public speech of L. Quintius was a strong attack upon the tribunes for their refusal to take seriously the capture of the Capitol. The plebeian electors were influenced by his arguments. He announced his unalterable opposition to the Terentilian law, and his intention of preventing its passage by levying the legions for a campaign against the Volscians and

Æqui. When the tribunes politely enquired how he would do it, in face of their veto, they received their first shock. He pointed out that the electors liable to military service were still bound by the terms of the military oath which they had sworn to P. Valerius. The tribunes attempted to get round this argument. They contended that as the oath was taken to P. Valerius, and not to L. Quintius, it no longer held good. On this point they were over-ruled. It had come to the knowledge of the tribunes that an intention, or project, or suggestion was afoot according to which a spot near Lake Regillus would be set apart with due augural formalities, where a legally constituted Assembly could be held. Every measure which had been carried at Rome through the use of the tribunician power could there be repealed, for seeing that the tribunician power extended only one mile from the city, an Assembly at Lake Regillus would be entirely under the control of the consuls. The tribunes were all the more disturbed by the frank declaration of L. Quintius that he did not intend, when the time came round again, to conduct an election of consuls. The times, he said, needed a dictator.

If he were only trying to frighten them, he overshot his mark and frightened them a little too much. The whole plebeian order rose as one man at this threat. Headed by the tribunes, they marched in grand procession to the senate. The *paires*, always wary, arbitrated. It was agreed that the Terentilian proposals should be dropped for the current year, while the consuls for their part were not to take the army outside the sphere of tribunician authority. The senate also expressed the view that it was not quite in keeping with the Roman tradition that magistrates should be re-elected year after year. The consuls accepted this arbitration. When, however, the elections came round, the tribunes were re-elected in spite of the senatorial dictum. To keep the balance level, therefore, the senate proposed that L. Quintius be re-elected to the consulship.

Far from mollifying old Quintius, the senate's proposal deeply incensed him. His remarks were candid and open. He thought this action of the senate was exactly the same kind of thing to which he had objected in the tribunes – a light-hearted way of altering old and solemn institutions just because they

happened to be inconvenient at the moment. At his own request, therefore, he was discharged from nomination.

As soon as the Terentilian proposals came up again for discussion, they were hindered by a fresh difficulty. The quæstors – who were the consuls' deputies in the investigation of cases of murder as well as in the examination of accounts – had evidently been enquiring into the evidence under which Cæso Quintius had been condemned; and they now charged the principal witness with perjury. The tribunes regarded this as a fresh expedient for obstructing the passage of the bill; and they vetoed every attempt to clear the memory of Cæso as long as the passage of the bill was obstructed.

Another year came round – the fourth. Among the magistrates elected for the year was Titus Quintius Capitolinus as quæstor. He had taken the office largely for the purpose of justifying the name of his kinsman Cæso. A deadlock had, however, now been reached, and the whole situation would have drifted on unchanged to another year still, had it not been upset by external events. A particularly large and dangerous raid of the Sabines came up almost to the walls of the city; the consuls proved incompetent; one indeed was cut off by the enemy; the only thing to do was to appoint a dictator – and by general consent the person nominated was L. Quintius.

One of the world's famous legends is the story how L. Quintius, unaware of the honour conferred upon him, was in his shirt, clearing a ditch upon his diminished property, when the deputation from the senate arrived. Requested to put on his toga, in order to receive an official communication from the august body, the old fellow hastily called to his wife to bring from the house the requisite article of clothing. Duly arrayed, he then received the notification of his dictatorship, and (no doubt after cleaning the mud off his boots) proceeded to take a boat across the river into the city. He soon had everything in order. When led by a gruff practical soldier like L. Quintius, with whose temperament and character they were thoroughly in sympathy, the Roman citizen-soldiers had no difficulty in dealing with the raiders. The missing consul was rescued; his besiegers were defeated and obliged to submit to the humiliating if harmless little ceremony of 'going under the yoke'; and in less than a fortnight's time the army was home

again, celebrating its leader's triumph. On the same day, Roman citizenship was solemnly conferred on L. Mamilius of Tusculum.

Old Quintius had just one thing remaining to do. Before he laid down the imperial power of the dictatorship, he used it to bring forward the trial for perjury of the witness whose false testimony had destroyed Cæso. There was practically no defence. M. Volscius Factor went into exile, and L. Quintius resigned his dictatorship on the sixteenth day after he had been nominated to it. Presumably he took a boat back across the river and resumed work upon the ditch.

VI

The removal of the stigma from the name of Cæso seemed to exercise a calming effect on the general situation. When the tribunes, re-elected for the fifth time, had duly placed their veto upon the proposals of the consuls, and the deadlock was continued, all parties were perhaps a little tired of the monotony. Another compromise was arranged, by which the number of plebeian tribunes was increased to ten, and in return the senate obtained an undertaking that the same tribunes should not be elected year after year. This undertaking was broken at the very next election; and it was evident enough that the force of events would carry away the weary disputants. A rainy year brought scarcity and high prices, and unrest among the plebs. For two more years the contest went on, until it culminated in a successful attempt of the tribunes to get the consuls impeached. The consuls had sold (presumably for the benefit of the public treasury)¹ the booty taken in a raid against the Æqui, and they were now, to the indignation of their friends, heavily fined for their action. The next two consuls, however, proved obdurate, and were quite uninfluenced by the fate of their predecessors. Eight years had now been occupied in the struggle, and the tribunes decided to alter their tactics altogether, and to strike out a fresh line of policy.

The new proposal was that a commission of ten should be appointed (five patricians and five plebeians) to go thoroughly into the whole idea that had been mooted in the proposals of

¹ i.e. instead of allowing the loot to the troops. Cf. Tacitus, *Historias*, III, 10.

Terentilius Harsa. Why not, instead of specifying only the powers of the consulship, specify in writing the whole basis of the state, so that every one should have the benefit of it? The patricians, perhaps foreseeing that a written law would eventuate sooner or later, against their will if not with it, were now prepared to consider a large general scheme of this kind. As a preliminary, a committee of three was requested to investigate the whole subject of written law.

It was the general principle which needed a little thought, rather than any question of detail. What were they about to do? Obviously, to lay down a number of general propositions, which could be applied to all the various circumstance that might arise in practical life, and to which the by-laws of the minor component bodies of the state must conform themselves. But precedents existed which the Romans ought to study. Law has been the product of a long development. Tribal institutions, never having been deliberately made by man, could not be altered by him. But the law of a political state is for the most part deliberately made and therefore can be controlled by the state. Simple as these elements may seem, they took a couple of thousand years of shuffling and reshuffling before the right combinations began to appear. In the legislation of the earlier Mesopotamian cities we are conscious of a rather unstable mixture of the irrevocable custom and the arbitrary fiat. By the time the Greek commercial cities had reached their zenith, repeated experiment and close study had evolved by degrees a notion of law continually less irrevocable, and continually less arbitrary. Under the early Greek jurists an idea was developed that law is not merely something that the subject ought to obey, but also something that the legislator ought to promulgate.¹ The subject is not morally compelled to obey a law that the legislator is not morally compelled to enact: or in other words, a law has no claim to obedience unless it is just – but then its claim is absolute. This idea of justice once having been evolved, it took another two thousand years to thresh out the real meaning of ‘justice.’ We have not finished yet. With the conception of justice, a highly complex idea of a rational

¹ Law ‘was not a command addressed by the sovereign to the people, or a contract between ruler and ruled, but an obligation which the citizens took upon themselves at the request of the magistrate.’ (Botsford, *Roman Assemblies*, p. 179.)

law, based upon permanent principles, dawned upon the minds of men.

If law, as we have come to understand the phrase, was destined to reach its full development under the Roman state, part of the reason was that the transitional stages took place on Italian soil. The first written law in Europe came into existence at Locri, in southern Italy. Not until forty years later was the example copied in the Athenian code of Draco. The later legislation of Solon at Athens was contemporary with that of Charondas at Catana in Sicily; and the work of Charondas was particularly important because it was not restricted to a single city, but gave a written legal system to at least four other independent Italian and Sicilian states. The world made giant strides between the age of Zaleucus at Locri and Charondas at Catana. The system of Charondas was a genuine code, worked out in considerable detail. It was not until a century later that Rome, as we have seen, began to feel the need of a fixed and written law. There were plenty of working examples to be considered by the committee appointed to examine the written codes already in operation. According to Livius the committee took the trouble to go to Athens and study Solon's legislation upon the spot. As Solon's system was the most enlightened of its period, and full of a genuine care for humanity and the average man, we may hope that the committee found benefit from its journey. It was absent close upon two years, so that its investigations must have been thorough. During the interval famine, pestilence and cattle disease made life difficult for the Romans.

As soon as the committee had completed its labours, the tribunes insisted that a beginning should be made with the task of compiling a basic code for the Roman state. A commission of ten members was decided upon. The question then arose whether the plebeians were entitled to representation upon the commission. Ultimately they stood out, in return for concessions on certain points. The president of the board was Appius Claudius.

The proceedings of the commission gave perfect satisfaction to the electors. In due time it produced a code of laws – usually known as 'the Laws of the Twelve Tablets' – which were exhibited for inspection and discussion at a special assembly.

They were statements of principle rather than laws in the ordinary sense; they class with Magna Carta, the Petition of Right, or the Declaration of Independence.¹ After discussion and amendment they were finally enacted by the vote of an Assembly of the Centuries, and the twelve tablets were permanently set up in the Forum as evidence of the fundamental laws of the Roman People. Titus Livius remarks that even in his own day they remained the basis of all subsequent jurisprudence: and in fact they continued to be the foundation of law as long as the Roman state endured.

VII

The establishment of the Law of the Twelve Tablets placed in the hands of the Roman people the power of controlling their own destiny. Rome no longer depended upon a divine law incapable of modification or change, but upon a human, a political law, which was made by man and could be adjusted to suit the circumstances of the day: and which, moreover, was published so that all men might know it without mistake. The very steps by which they had obtained this power had also trained them in its use. By patience, discussion and a habit of compromise which they had exercised with judgment and good faith, they had created an effective method, an effective tradition of legislation. The *patres* had certainly led the way in creating this method. They had restrained their own hot-heads, as well as those of the plebeians; they had discouraged violence and favoured conciliation and although their motives might sometimes be of the bread and butter variety, they were not much the worse for that.

¹ In after ages, Roman children learnt the Laws of the Twelve Tablets at school: and it is important for us to realize clearly the nature of the elementary principles so taught them: e.g. -

'Only a rich man shall stand security for a rich man; but any security shall be sufficient for a poor man.'

'No judicial decision after sundown' (i.e., otherwise than in complete publicity).

'In controverted cases of property the presumption shall always be on the side of the man in possession; in cases of liberty, the presumption shall always be on the side of liberty.'

'If a road between two fields be bad, the traveller may drive through either of the fields at his discretion.'

'No person shall be beyond the law.'

'The life, liberty or rights of a Roman citizen shall only be tried before the Assembly of Roman citizens.'

'The law last made shall be the law in force'

There were difficulties over the dissolution of the commission which had carried out the work. The commissioners themselves felt that Rome could not be under better government than their own. The *patres* hoped to see the consulship quietly restored so that the plebeians should forget all about that unpleasant thing, the tribuneship. The plebs trusted to see the tribuneship re-instituted, without the hated consulship. These jealousies so far hindered the task of winding up the commission that it was still in being two years after its first session, when the plebs, having no other means at the moment of expressing their views, hastened its demise by a military revolt. It was therefore the tribunes who chanced to be the first elected officers of the restored republic. By the agreement which was then made, the tribunes were the persons who proposed the act of oblivion and indemnity, and the resolution re-establishing the consulship and the right of appeal from the consuls to the popular assembly. By this means the consuls were again elected. Since, however, it was very questionable whether patricians were bound by the ordinances of the Ward Assembly, they needed a way of justifying the action of the tribunes. Any display of tactlessness at this juncture might have left the patricians without any magistracy at all: so they consented to carry through the Assembly of the Centuries a law that a decision of the Ward Assembly should be binding upon the whole state.¹ The old arrangements of the republic were re-instituted in due legal form by statute, instead of being left, as before, wholly to custom and prescription.

For many years after the introduction of the written code there was greater harmony in the state than it had ever known since it began. The consuls governed with moderation. It was particularly the influence of the Quintian House – during this time at its greatest height of prosperity – which effected this desirable end. L. Quintius Cincinnatus and T. Quintius Capitolinus, both of them held office. They were popular and trusted magistrates, and their example set a fashion of moderation in thought and conduct.

¹ Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 109. This law, originally intended for the specific purpose described above, was extended in 339 and 287 B.C., into a rule of universal and unqualified application, so that the Ward Assembly became the legislative body of the republic. Cf. Botsford, *Roman Assemblies*, pp. 312-315.

VIII

This new mood was not for want of controversial material. Only five years after the code had been issued, the tribune G. Canuleius proposed his famous law for permitting the intermarriage of patricians and plebeians. At the same time the proposal was made that one of the two consuls should be a plebeian.

Such proposals were only a very little short of proposals for the official abolition of the patrician order – that is to say, proposals that the state should no longer recognize the existence of the great aristocratic houses as a separate order in the state. The plebeian argument, that the patricians owed their position in the state to the will of the state, which could therefore modify it, was unanswerable, especially considering the authority now given to this view by the existence of a written law. As the new code prevented the patricians from retaining the prohibition of intermarriage purely as a matter of social custom among themselves – which is what it had originally been – they elected to sacrifice the prohibition altogether in order to strengthen their own hands in resisting the claim of the plebeians to the consulship. As long as they retained a monopoly in the consulship, they could not be prevented from exercising a general supremacy in the state.

The tribunes, however, taking advantage of the external situation, put their veto upon the military levy until they should obtain the whole of their demands. Very serious conferences were held among the patricians. Their concession over the Canuleian law had been useless. They were still confronted by (as they reckoned it) a demand for total surrender. Should they resist? G. Claudius, then the head of his house, was in favour of authorizing the consuls to use force. The two Quintian brothers opposed this policy¹; and they were successful in inducing their fellow patricians to adhere to the plan of conciliation, moderation and compromise. It was decided to offer the plebeians, as an alternative to the consulship, a new magistracy, the Consular Tribuneship, which should be open to patricians and plebeians alike. The new

¹ For an example of how it might have worked, see the classic instance of I Kings xii – Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

office was to exercise all the authority of the consulship with certain modifications. It was to be divided among six (instead of two) holders; it was not to entitle them to celebrate a triumph, nor to enter the senate at the expiry of their term: nor yet to wield the consuls' power over the military classification of the citizens or the assessment of their liability to service or taxation. A new magistracy – the Censorship, to which patricians alone were eligible – was created to carry out these duties of the consuls. For the time being, the plebeians accepted this compromise.

Nothing is more remarkable in life than the way in which good feeling and forbearance, even when exercised by simple-minded people, will function as if they were an almost preternatural cunning. The Quintian brothers were probably very prosaic and even bucolic fellows, elderly squires without the faintest claim to intellectual profundity. Nevertheless, the brain of a Newton could not have evolved a policy more subtly calculated than theirs was to keep the reins of power in patrician hands. They shepherded Rome carefully into paths in which a minority of able men would have all the advantage. They played the game of politics with the impassivity of card-players: they bluffed, they finessed, sometimes they carried off a little quiet deception – the one thing forbidden was violence. In a fight, despite their soldierly qualities, it is likely enough that the patricians would have lost. They were too few in number. But under the Quintian leadership they never fought. They smiled, and argued, and held their ground.

Only one apparent exception to this rule took place. Some six or seven years or so after the compromise, a serious shortage of crops put Rome into difficulties. After a free exchange of recriminations between the parties, a Food Controller was appointed in the person of L. Minucius. He was not so successful as he might have been. A few months later he made a startling report to the senate.

According to his allegations, part of his difficulties had been caused by the fact that a private person, one Spurius Mælius, had been buying up corn behind the back of the authorized magistrate, and using it to create for himself a following among the starving poor. Arms were being collected at the house of Mælius, and conferences were being held there, at which plans

for a monarchist revolution were discussed. Such were the statements of Minucius.

To the horrified senate the consuls replied that owing to the new laws they had no power to take any steps; only a Dictator had the legal authority required. L. Quintius Cincinnatus was therefore nominated Dictator. His methods, when confronted by what he thought to be a dangerous crisis, prove that his policy of moderation was not due to timidity. The old man went straight to the Forum, took his seat as supreme magistrate, and sent his Master of the Horse, G. Servilius Ahala, to bring Mælius before him. Faced with such a summons, Mælius lost his nerve, declined to go, attempted to escape, and was killed on the spot by Ahala. Although there was division of opinion among the tribunes, the majority endorsed the action of L. Quintius. Mælius had resisted a legal summons. The Dictator had acted in accordance with the terms of the new laws. The corn collected by Mælius was distributed among the poor at a cheap rate.

IX

In forty-three years the plebeians succeeded twenty-three times in forcing the election of consular tribunes instead of consuls. In spite of this fact, not one plebeian, throughout the forty-three years, ever obtained election. The plebeians were by no means silent over this remarkable and interesting fact; but they played the game, although they criticized some of its features. The board of Consular Tribunes was not without practical advantages. In time of war it provided several qualified commanders with full magisterial authority, instead of only two. Its disadvantage was that it allowed greater scope for personal differences: a drawback which could be, and sometimes was a very serious one. Nevertheless, it was among the consuls, not among the consular tribunes, that the first signs appeared of the rift in the patrician ranks which later on was to have such great consequences. The tribunes of the plebs were able to take advantage of this new element in the situation. It became visible and noteworthy when, in the forty-fourth year, a startling event happened. Publius Licinius Calvus, a plebeian, was elected to the consular tribuneship. Only a movement of considerable magnitude among the electors in the

higher classes could have brought this about. As P. Licinius gave perfect satisfaction in all quarters, the plebeian advent into the sacred domain of executive government was regarded as successful.

To the Romans there was no visible reason why they should not go on for several hundred years to come in the same manner. We, looking on, can see that, unknown to themselves, they were hastening towards a consummation, a crisis and a change.

It is not possible for us now to measure with exactness the economic pressure which troubled Rome in the first century of the Republic. That there had been some fall of productivity after the expulsion of the kings is certain enough; in the intervening years of struggle the decline may have been fought, and possibly counteracted—but if so, the improvement was neutralized by the natural increase in the population of the city, and the difficulty, even if for a changed reason, subsisted unchanged. In the twelve years between 438 and 426 B.C. there were six years of either famine or epidemic; and although this may have been an unusually bad series of years it was promptly followed in the year 425 by the first debates on the subject of war with Veii. In other words, Rome recognized the necessity of expansion. There was no other course.

The first feeble attempts were disappointing. After the capture of Fidenæ, a truce for eighteen years was made with Veii. As soon as the scandals arising out of this war had been disposed of, the tribunes betrayed the way the wind was blowing by a proposal for distributing the public domain. What is described as a 'servile plot' followed—that is to say, an attempted revolution on the part of bankrupts who could never hope for discharge, and who had been turned over to their creditors. The capture of Labici from the Æqui enabled the senate to send thither fifteen hundred colonists of the poorer classes. It was even suggested that in future all land conquered from an enemy should be cut up into small holdings for the poorer citizens: a proposal which excited the strongest objections from the patricians, who never could endure to hear of this type of plan. Appius Claudius induced some of the tribunes themselves to see the patrician side of the case, and by their help the plan was quashed, as was also a similar proposal to

colonize Bolæ. Another pestilence and another famine saw the eighteen years' truce with Veii expire amid some unrest and general dissatisfaction. This time Veii was doomed. The tribunes objected, but the *patres* had made up their minds. They decided of their own accord that in future citizen-soldiers should receive pay while on service. The delighted electors, although warned by their tribunes that this concession was not in all ways the disinterested benevolence it may have seemed, carried the proposal for war with Veii.

In this way, only partly and dimly aware of what they were doing, the Romans launched upon that career of expansion which was to bring them, many years later, to the Clyde and the Euphrates.

X

The war did not turn out what every one doubtless hoped. Like some other wars, it proved unexpectedly long, worrying and expensive. Veii was a city as great, as powerful and as rich as Rome. In the third year, the Roman commanders resolved to build a permanent work of circumvallation and to institute a complete blockade, summer and winter. Although the tribunes at once denounced this scheme as a political conspiracy to enslave the plebs, it was carried out. Even so, Veii did not fall. There was a year of disastrous muddle in which argumentative patrician consular tribunes defied the senate and zealous tribunes of the plebs rushed to the aid of the *patres*. There was a year in which the tribunes of the plebs, now not quite so zealous, were denouncing the political conspirators who were plotting to kill the elector at the front while they ruined him at home. There was a year in which the Tiber froze, and the roads were blocked with snow, and vehement *patres* denounced the tribunes of the plebs as having caused a judgment from heaven because of their wicked words. There was a year in which the Alban lake curdled every one's blood by rising without visible cause to an unprecedented height; and an aged Veientine prophesied (amid jeers from all parties) that never would Veii be taken until that surplus water was used to water the fields of Rome – a fairly safe prophecy. A perhaps dull but earnestly patriotic Roman soldier lured the aged Veientine up a dark lane, kidnapped him, and produced

Sketch Map I



The Unification of Italy

him before his commanding officer. To the commander he stuck to his prophecy – safety now forbade retreat. Remitted to the senate, who at first pooh-poohed this nonsense, he still maintained his prophecy. The senate thereupon had a brain-wave. It sent to Delphi for confirmation of the divine intimation. The Delphic oracle had no objection to obliging. Armed with this, the senate led an interested and united city to the work of draining off the Alban lake. By completing one part of the prophecy, it inspired every patriotic citizen with the enthusiastic conviction that the completion of the second was not far off. The fall of Veii was at hand !

Veii now sent urgently to its friends of the Etruscan League. A conference at Voltumna held out no hope. Earlier in the war, the League had declined to give help, because Veii had acted without consulting it. Now it could not help, for its members were themselves in danger. They would, however, raise no objection to the enlistment of volunteers. This was all that Veii could look for. The danger which tied the hands of the Etruscan League was the advance of the Gauls in Italy.

The next year came; and the Romans, having reduced the Alban lake to its proper level, and duly watered their fields with the surplus, came as one man to the triumphant task of taking Veii. Marcus Furius Camillus was appointed Dictator; Latins and Hernicians volunteered; the plunder of Veii was thrown open to any one who chose to come for it and the Roman rear was soon crowded with eager followers.

Whatsoever function in the matter the Alban lake may have fulfilled, M. Furius Camillus knew his business. He reorganized the siege and took Veii by storm – and very great and terrible was the fall of that Etruscan city, the first-fruits of Roman conquest. Even the Romans themselves were a little appalled when they saw Camillus rolling up the Sacred Way with five milk-white horses to draw his triumphal car. Had any human being a right to the pride of five milk-white horses ? Had they been too lucky ?

The tradition is that when Camillus beheld the plunder of Veii he lifted up his hands to heaven and prayed that the jealousy of the great gods might be averted by a calamity which should be least injurious to himself and Rome. As he turned,

he stumbled and fell: and this was afterwards remembered as an awful omen.

While the Romans were still quarrelling over the plunder of Veii, the instruments of the jealousy of the gods, which Camillus feared, were riding with crested helms and floating moustachios southward through Italy – the Gauls.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CAMILLUS AND THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

(396 B.C. – 280 B.C.)

I

Rome needed a little steadying after the capture of Veii. The citizen electors made rather more fuss about it than when, in later years, she swallowed Gaul whole. There was some ill-feeling about the spoils. M. Furius Camillus, before the citizens had been invited to help themselves, had solemnly devoted a tenth part to Apollo; and now he had difficulty in collecting it, and needed to conduct a campaign of speeches in order to impress the facts upon the electors. They did not want to pay, and objected to the whole arrangement.

Worse still, when the senate proposed to found a colony on the southern borders of Latium, the plebs regarded the scheme with contempt. They wanted Veii turned into a colony, founded with orders of patricians and plebeians complete. This proposal the patricians resisted with fervour, and the contest over the subject was somewhat heated. The patricians had not subdued one Veii for the purpose of immediately creating another. Their purpose had been to remove a powerful rival, which hindered the expansion of Rome, and at the same time to acquire more land for their own citizens. The struggle over this question had a very serious side to it, for the patricians were obliged to purchase immunity from the threat of this new Veii by conceding the division of the Veientine territory. By great efforts, and canvassing in person, the *patres* defeated the proposal: but the majority was narrow. The land of Veii was then allotted at the rate of seven *jugera* per head – not per household, but per head, counting the children. As a *jugerum* was about five-eighths of an acre, a family of five would obtain nearly twenty-two acres. Although this expedient made the

allotments as large as possible, they were not large enough. The wonderfully drained and cultivated large estates of Veii were cut up into plots; the magnificent engineering works fell into disrepair, and the whole level of productivity was reduced.¹

Not content with this, the plebs impeached M. Furius Camillus for his action over the spoils. The man who had taken Veii, aware that genius is an indiscretion which democracy seldom forgives, retired into exile at Ardea, and for the time being the city had a respite from him.

He had hardly turned his back upon Rome when envoys arrived from Clusium.

II

The purpose of the mission from Clusium was to obtain help against the Gauls. The Romans, a little vague upon the subject, were impressed, without fully realizing the import of the message. Although Clusium had no particular claim upon Rome, it was agreed to send ambassadors to the Gauls to warn them, and to indicate that if necessity arose, Rome would intervene to defend Clusium. The three sons of M. Fabius Ambustus were sent. Their interview with the Gallic chiefs was the first contact between Gauls and Romans.

Hitherto Rome had dwelt in a strangely restricted world of small towns, local interests, and narrow proprieties. The Gauls were the first influence which brought into this almost domestic circle some breath of the vast world beyond, with its large mountains, its enormous plains, its rivers and forests, its gigantic tragedy and eternal hope. The astonishing moustachioed giants who owned the name of Gaul were polite enough. They had not before had the pleasure of hearing the name of the Roman people, but they were quite willing to believe that it was all it claimed to be. Since the Romans wished to exercise friendly influence to preserve peace, the Gauls were ready to accept it. The terms were that Clusium should grant to the Gauls, who needed it, such part of their land as they could not themselves cultivate. The Gauls requested the Roman envoys to be present when the demand and the answer were exchanged between the parties, and also to witness the subsequent

¹ Tenney Frank, *Economic History of Rome*, pp. 45-48.

proceedings, with a view to reporting to their own people what they then saw.

The astonished Romans asked by what right they demanded property from its recognized owners; and how they came to be in Etruria at all. The Gallic chiefs touched their weapons: their authority was the right of the strongest. . . . They lived just a little too early in time to have heard of Natural Selection or the Survival of the Fittest, but in any event, it was the law of the wild to which they appealed. . . . Romans, with all their faults, were not men to sit down quietly before claims that seemed to them so horrible and abhorrent as this. The three ambassadors had no hesitation in fighting in the ranks of the Clusini. What is more, one of them – Quintus Fabius – killed with his own hand a Gallic chief of high rank. He was recognized and identified, and the Gauls sent to Rome to protest against his action.

The senate was in a quandary when confronted with the Gallic message. There could be no doubt about the indiscretion of the episode. Q. Fabius, to show his detestation of the law of the wild, had himself appealed to it. But the senate was not for a moment likely to surrender to a strange and barbarous people the person of a Roman of patrician birth, who had performed an action which every Roman instinctively endorsed. So thoroughly did the electors agree with the views of the law of the wild entertained by the three ambassadors, that the latter were all elected as consular tribunes for the following year. This was an expression of opinion which the Gauls resented. The chiefs decided to march upon Rome.

The Romans were still a little vague. They were still living in a world bounded by Veii and Falerii, the Volscians and the Æqui. The citizen army which issued from Rome to meet the Gauls did not in any way realize the nature of the force that would come into collision with it.

III

They had lined up opposite the debouchure of the Alia, a torrential brook which fell into the Tiber 'a little below the road to Crustumerium': a thin line, and even so they were outflanked as well as outnumbered. The roads were filled to overflowing with the Gallic horsemen who came riding down from

Clusium: the same big, grey-eyed, tawny men whom Cæsar was some day to know so well, with their great horses, their towering lances and their rich caparisons. The cities closed their gates and showed nothing but an armoured watchman or two; the country-people fled right and left with what they could carry, as that flood rolled southward. At the Alia, the Gallic chiefs looked with astonishment on what purported to be the ranks of conquering Rome.

The Romans, though normally a strong-nerved people, transmitted to later generations some touch of the shock they received on this 18th of July. It was their first experience of that horrific thing – a charge of North-European fighting men. The Roman citizen troops fled almost before the Gallic onslaught reached them: most of those who fell were slain in the pursuit. Many were driven into the Tiber. Some reached Rome; but the greater part took refuge in the ruins of Veii. The Gauls themselves could not understand it. After assuring themselves that there was no deception, they pressed on to Rome. The horsemen, who reached Rome at sunset, reported that no defence was being offered. That night the blazing camp-fires of the Gallic host were visible from Rome, and its shouting and uproar were audible in the city.

The inhabitants of Rome, ignorant of the exact details of the battle, had no doubt that their army was wiped off the face of the earth. Their magistrates were gone with it. All that night they worked feverishly to prepare for an evacuation of the city. The ring wall was not defensible. Since the siege by Porsena it had fallen more and more into ruin: and it would not keep out the Gauls a moment after its weakness was discovered. The men of military age were called to the standards; all the available provisions were collected, and the citadel and Capitoline Hill were garrisoned. Those who could face the difficulties and hardships of travel prepared for the exodus from Rome. Goods were packed, wagons harnessed. Those who had no vehicles walked: among whom were the priest of Quirinus and the Vestal Virgins, carrying with them the sacred fire. The immortal name of L. Albinus, a plebeian, is preserved, who, shocked at seeing the Vestal Virgins with the sacred fire going on foot, turned his family out of his wagon and drove the holy load to Cære and safety.

Meanwhile, those who remained behind prepared for death. The patricians who had filled magistracies announced their intention of remaining with their fellow-citizens. Their houses were thrown open: their curule chairs were placed at the threshold, and arrayed in their official robes, they took their seats, holding their ivory rods of office.

Another day had come before the Gauls, having rested, and prospected, found that nothing prevented them from entering the city. They filtered in little by little, a few at a time, stared at the silent streets, and were amazed at the purple-clad elders sitting on their ivory thrones by the doors of splendour. At first they were somewhat intimidated. The spell was only broken when a Gaul touched M. Papirius, to see if he was real. The proud patrician struck the Gaul with his ivory rod, and instantly was slain, together with his colleagues and countrymen. A good deal of indiscriminate killing and burning took place, but no systematic destruction. The total damage done was less than might have been expected. . . . Those who had remained to face death for the most part met it. Impregnable and passive amid all this stood the citadel on the Capitoline height.

IV

While Rome burned and the Gauls collected what they could find from its empty houses, the army at Veii began to recover itself. Dispersed fugitives came in, and volunteers from the Latin cities, bringing with them news, comments, and the stimulating breath of public opinion. The Gauls had brought with them no provision whatsoever for a long siege of the Capitol, so they had at once sent out foraging columns in all directions to collect supplies. Their success had not been very great; and in the neighbourhood of Ardea M. Furius Camillus, issuing from retirement, had with the help of local forces inflicted a very damaging and discouraging reverse upon them. The army at Veii decided to invite Camillus to take command.

Even in these circumstances, the Romans were careful to proceed in due form and in a legal manner. A private soldier, Pontius Cominus, floated down the Tiber and scaled the Capitoline rock. The senators and magistrates in the citadel solemnly opened a sitting of the House, and instructed the army

as to its correct course. The army at Veii then resolved itself into a meeting of the electoral Assembly, revoked the sentence that had formerly been passed on M. Furius Camillus, and nominated him dictator. As soon as Camillus, at Ardea, was notified of these proceedings by a deputation which waited upon him, he accepted with dignity the invitation of his fellow countrymen, and came to Veii.

Although the events connected with the recall of Camillus cannot have taken long, the time which elapsed was sufficient to effect considerable modifications in the situation at Rome. One attempt to scale the Capitoline rock was made by the Gauls. Owing to the negligence of a sentinel, they even reached the top before they were betrayed by the frightened cackling of the sacred geese. M. Manlius, a consular, rushed to the spot, threw the foremost Gaul down the precipice, and saved the situation. The siege became a blockade. Both sides were reduced to the very short commons ; while the malarial low-lying districts of Rome, in an Italian summer, were a veritable deathtrap to the Gauls. The appearance of Camillus at Veii, and his measures of re-organization, may not have escaped the attention of the leaders. Finally they accepted as ransom a thousand pounds weight of gold, and withdrew. Few stories are more famous than that of the unfair conduct of the Gauls during the weighing, and the protest made by the Romans. In reply to the protest the Gallic Brennus unbuckled his sword and tossed it into the scale among the weights.

What did that mean ? asked the astonished Romans.

'Mean ?' said the Gaul. 'What should it mean, but woe to the vanquished ?'

So small a ransom as a thousand pounds of gold meant that the besiegers were throwing up the sponge: and Camillus, issuing from Veii, hung upon the flank of a beaten army which hurried away from a spot which had become dangerous and ill-omened to the Gauls.

And so it vanished, leaving a changed Rome behind it.

V

The condition of instability which had already caused a long series of changes in Rome was so much accentuated by the sack of the city by the Gauls, that the changes became still more

rapid and important. A very large number of private houses had been destroyed, many of which belonged to the poorer class of citizen. How were these houses to be rebuilt? Those citizens who, under the stress of the war taxes and absence on military service, had hovered on the border-line of bankruptcy, were now reinforced by a fresh horde who had rebuilt their houses with loaned capital, and found it difficult or impossible to keep up their payments. Even while the patricians insisted that these men were under an obligation to pay the debts they had contracted, they were swayed in the direction of policies which would help these debtors: and this influence decided many of the external policies of Rome.

The plebs for some time advocated with earnestness that Rome should be abandoned, and that the whole of her inhabitants should migrate to Veii. Their practical reasons for such a course were far from despicable. Rome was damp, cramped and unhealthy, and still worse, was now in ruins. Veii, as a site, was incomparably superior. Camillus led the patrician opposition to the plan of migration, and his influence barely sufficed to defeat it. But the reasons adduced by the patricians were not practical ones. Camillus did not contend that Rome was a better, healthier, or more convenient site. He appealed to a set of feelings and emotions which were curious and complex, religious in their outward form – though we might call them poetic or imaginative – but political in their ultimate effect. Camillus called the citizens, by every appeal he could think of, to rally to the old city, the familiar place, the formed tradition. What he and his friends wanted was above all to avoid the danger to Roman solidarity which would come of the process of removal and transplantation. By great efforts, infinite patience and determined courage, they had in the past shepherded Rome into ways of unity, law-abidingness, and discipline. All this would go if they transferred themselves to Veii. Habits, so beneficial when good, would vanish. They would be starting the world again with a new and unformed tradition. Hence, the aim of the patrician leaders was to preserve at any cost this old, formed and accustomed Roman solidarity, even if it did involve continuing in the malaria-haunted, fever-stricken hollows of the Tiber and rebuilding a burnt city as cheaply as possible. In gaining their way, they

were committed to doing all they could to ameliorate the results. It became their duty to acknowledge the conduct of the plebeian majority by obtaining land for the poor, and in every possible way enlarging the economic power and the agricultural and commercial prosperity of Rome. If they failed in this, they would stand in the indefensible position of men who had given their fellow-citizens disastrous counsel. . . . For a hundred years, the policy of Rome was determined by considerations such as these.

VI

The way was not short, nor was it easy. With (as the tribunes declared) half the plebs bankrupt, and a large number of them indisputably in danger of a similar fate, the way of a patrician government was hard. The only man who felt any really strong urge towards giving all his property to the poor was T. Manlius, the heroic defender of the Capitol. His frequent intervention in order to rescue distressed plebeians from the law of debt was not regarded by his fellow-patricians in the light we might have hoped. They did not think that he was inspired by the purest moral motives; and they did not consider that he was doing any good. Even if half the plebs were bankrupt, how would Rome be saved by all the patricians becoming bankrupt too? As Manlius, in defending his procedure, seems to have found it difficult to avoid frequent references to his own noble and heroic conduct in the defence of the Capitol, he did not diminish the suspicion that he had ulterior motives. In these days Dionysius was reigning in Syracuse; and the background so given to the policy of Manlius may have thrown it into a relief not very pleasing to determined republican on-lookers.

Whether the motives of Titus Manlius were good or bad, he had no opportunity of experimenting with a popular dictatorship as a cure for the difficulties of Rome. He was requested to substantiate some of the charges he had brought against the government, and being unable to do so he was imprisoned. Released again, he was tried for monarchical conspiracy on an indictment framed by two tribunes of the plebs; he was condemned, not by any bench of paid judges, but by his fellow-citizens in the assembly of the electoral groups, and he was

executed in the legal way, by being hurled off the Tarpeian rock. Opinion was not by any means unanimous on the subject of his treason – and under similar circumstances, it would not be unanimous to-day – but according to the accounts given, he had a fair and public trial, and was not shuffled out of the way by any hole and corner methods.

But the death of Manlius, even if it saved Rome from a Roman Dionysius, did not mitigate the troubles from which she was suffering. These troubles needed to be faced: and they were dealt with in two ways – first, by a plebeian policy of political reform, and secondly by a patrician policy of colonization and expansion. The policy of reform, although it was carried through by the energy and organization of the plebeians, owed its origin to patrician inspiration. It was started by M. Fabius Ambustus, a patrician of liberal sympathies, the father-in-law of the wealthy plebeian G. Licinius Stolo.¹ They brought another plebeian of distinction into their association – L. Sextius, then a young and ambitious man. Their scheme – based upon the belief that really effective steps for the relief of plebeian debtors would never be taken until the plebs shared in the highest offices of government – was to force through legislation embodying the long-desired claim that one consul must always be a plebeian. They proposed also to put forward a scheme for the reduction of debts, and, as their third point, the limitation of landed property to 500 *jugera*, so that no single person should own more. This was a radical programme, for the policy of limiting estates was, in the circumstances of Rome in that age, a proposal for the distribution of property and the limitation of incomes. Similarly, the scheme for the reduction of debts involved the legislative cancellation of legal contracts, and the confiscation of property. . . . But these were no wild or ill-considered proposals. They were defended with the contention that they were imperatively necessary. Rome must have them, or go under.

On this programme Licinius and Sextius fought a political campaign extending over ten years. If the accounts are true, it was probably the greatest and most resolute political battle ever waged in Rome until the days of Cæsar. Brought up short by the tribunician veto, which the patricians secured in

¹ See the story in Livy VI, xxxiv.

their own favour, Licinius and Sextius employed it themselves to hold up government in Rome for (so it is said) five continuous years. Nothing could better illustrate the strength that the principle of law was rapidly acquiring in Rome, than the fact that such a contest could be carried on without civil war, revolution and collapse. A state which was capable of so much self-command was becoming capable of commanding others.

There was no lack of opportunity for violence. The final stages which saw the new proposals made into law were unique in Roman history. The patricians nominated Camillus, with all his prestige and influence, as dictator to watch the proceedings. When it became clear that the tribunes refused to give way, the *patres* withdrew him on the plea that there had been flaws in the circumstances of his nomination; and P. Manlius replaced him. The way the wind was blowing became visible when Manlius appointed a plebeian as his Master of the Horse. In the tenth year of the contest the legislation was passed. No mistake could possibly exist as to whether or no it had been constitutionally enacted. In the pause which followed, the aged Camillus, fresh from his fifth dictatorship, came forward. He had never concealed nor apologized for his opinions. He had been in all things a loyal member of the patrician order. Now he appealed to his fellow patricians to accept and to carry out the new laws. A few adjustments were made between the parties. A typically Roman compromise was arranged respecting various trifling details, and the two orders shook hands over the new scheme of things.

Neither of them ever had reason to regret their patience.

VII

The Licinian-Sextian laws marked an era in Roman history. The patricians with their gentile organization, and the plebs, with their political organization, were now on an equal footing: the special privilege of the patricians had gone, and with it had gone the possibility of placing upon their shoulders the exclusive responsibility for all the troubles of Rome. What they lost in privilege, they therefore made up in power. They could appeal now to argument as they never had formerly been able to appeal. But to make this clear needed time. . . . When, two years afterwards, Camillus died, the era was still

more deeply marked. He had led Rome out of her old world, and had ushered her into a new. The problems he had solved on her behalf were those attendant on her change from the status of an isolated city on the Tiber to that of the centre of a dominion. He had reorganized and rearmed her citizen-soldiers,¹ pointed the way towards a new and better system of training and invented a style of leadership that made him, at their head, an invincible general: he had seen the orders reconciled and their old feud healed. When he died, he left Rome ready for the great work that was to follow.

He himself to some extent embodied the change in the patrician order which made all these things possible. He had personally preferred power to privilege. He himself had been a man continually on the rostra, perpetually engaged in addressing, persuading and explaining to the people. If they did not always agree with him, it was not for lack of hearing his views.

Camillus, the conqueror of Veii and the reorganizer of the Roman state after its fall, is the first great figure of republican Rome. He is a legendary figure, in the sense that we have no contemporaneous written record of his life, and no power of checking the stories told of him: but he is in most other respects clearly outlined, and individually characterized. He is no stock figure of romance; no mythic or epic actions are attributed to him. Indeed, the description of his personality which comes down to us in the pages of Livy is arresting in its likelihood. We see a hard, decisive man, serious and unsmiling, quick in resolution, prompt in action, whose whole attitude is governed by a religious motive of a kind that nowadays has almost wholly died out. The religion of Camillus was a social discipline. It was not a cosmogony, nor a philosophy, nor an explanation of the problems that confronted him; nor a comfort to support his courage; it was a drill, or a method of ensuring that all the citizens of Rome should morally march in step. His insistence on religious exactitude is his specially marked characteristic. In the story that Livy tells us – the story that

¹ The three great changes made in the Roman military system during the lifetime of Camillus were the payment of the troops, their re-arming, and the disuse of the old organization of classes. From this time until the introduction of the manipular system in 312 B.C., the Roman tactical system was in a state of transition, the steps of which cannot be traced. The organization of classes continued to be the basis of the electoral Assembly (*comitia centuriata*) after it had ceased to have any military significance.

the Romans themselves accepted as true and orthodox – Camillus is practically the inventor and first exponent of this idea of religion as a common ground for citizenship. He is in any case, if not its first, at any rate its greatest prophet.

VIII

The external policy of Rome progressed rapidly and with effect after the reconciliation of the orders. The reforms which the plebeians forced upon the state enabled the patrician policy of colonization and expansion to reach a success it never could have achieved while the orders were hostile. In the twenty-three years that elapsed between the sack of the city and the Licinian-Sextian laws, only the reduction and organization of southern Etruria had been effected, and the absorption of Veii, Fidenæ and Capenæ into the state. But in the twenty-three years after the Licinian-Sextian laws had given political peace to Rome, far vaster strides were made; the Pomptine Marshes – a fertile agricultural district – were annexed, the treaty of Spurius Cassius was renewed on favourable terms with the Latin league, a friendly treaty was established with the Samnites of the southern mountains; the great Etruscan towns of Cære and Tarquinii, once the equals or the superiors of Rome, were brought into fresh relations with her by agreements; a treaty with Carthage was signed – not, it is true, enormously to the advantage of Rome, but for great Carthage to take any official cognizance of the existence of the Roman state was a proud event by the Tiber. This speeding up of Roman activity, and extension of Roman power, attracted attention in Campania. The Campanian cities, hard pressed by Samnite aggression, bethought themselves that there might be profit in an alliance with Rome. The senate heard, hesitated, then changed its mind, finally undertook to intervene – and the power and prosperity of Rome took a switch-back plunge into the unknown future.

The motives of the senate in accepting the invitation were neither very recondite, nor very discreditable. Rome was being pushed along a path by a pressure which could not be resisted. Land she positively must have, and not only land, but commercial treaties, open ports, and advantageous markets. The dream of access to the Campanian ports stirred the minds

of the *patres*: and it is possible that the prospect of securing a position in the rear of the Latin cities was not at all distasteful to them. Of the full results that were one day to follow, it is very unlikely that they ever thought. They went to Campania for immediate returns and practical purposes: and they obtained what they wanted.

This first brush with the Samnites was short. Two hard-fought battles, one at Mount Glaurus, the other at Suessula, were sufficient to leave Rome supreme in Campania.

The logic of events now took up the tale. For some time past Rome had been so much the predominant partner in the Latin league, that the system of relationships embodied in the old treaty of Spurius Cassius hardly corresponded any longer to the facts of the case. Either the Latins were entitled to privileges to which, hitherto, they had not been admitted, or Rome must be taught her place. As soon as the Campanian war had given the Romans access to the rear of the Latin league, the case became serious and urgent. Unless action were taken, the Latin league, without a word said, might become a mere system of dependence upon Rome, in which the facts had departed so far from those embodied in the treaty, that the latter would be no longer possible to enforce. The real terms would be settled by prescription, and would have slipped altogether out of the control of the Latins.

Hence, a year after the peace with the Samnites, the next gigantic stride forward was taken. An ultimatum was presented by the Latins, demanding equality of treatment. They demanded half the seats in the senate; and they claimed that one consul should be a Latin; they suggested one citizenship, one state, one union under the name of Rome.

Something more than vanity, or even pride, lay behind the indignation with which this claim was rejected by the Romans. Their strength, as Camillus had seen, was based upon their solidarity and their common tradition. He had successfully struggled to preserve these virtues from the destructive effects of transplantation. His successors were no less determined to preserve them from the destructive effects of dilution. They took up an attitude quite different from that which they had assumed towards the plebeians. With the latter they had compromised. With the Latins they proposed to fight to the

death. The Latin war was by far the greatest military enterprise hitherto attempted by Rome.¹

IX

The Latin war lasted three years. The progress of Rome cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that whereas she had once taken ten years to wear down the single city of Veii, she now took only three to bring to their knees a league of many cities. No less remarkable is the type of military operation by which her generals brought all this to pass. The Romans took and kept the offensive. During the first year the consuls set out across Italy, made a detour into Apulia, crossed, probably by Beneventum, to Nola, picked up a force of Samnite auxiliaries and were nearly at Neapolis before the Latins could march south to meet them. The battle which took place between Neapolis and Herculaneum was the first serious struggle with Latin troops, who had been trained on the same method and in the same tactics as the Romans themselves. It was fought with intense zeal and determination on both sides. One consul, P. Decius Mus, was slain on the field, and the battle was only decided when the Latins, believing that the Roman third line was engaged, sent in their own. It was a mistake, and the Roman third line, when at last it did advance, swept all before it and won the day. The Latins retreated north. The surviving consul, T. Manlius, pursued; and at Trifanum, between Minturnæ and Sinuessa, on the southern border of Latium, he inflicted upon them a second defeat which closed Campania and the Campanian alliance to the Latins. The war was shut into Latium.

During the next two years the war was fought out in Latium itself, and chiefly around the key position of Pedum, quite close to Rome. The plebeian consul, Q. Pubilius Philo, defeated an army of the Latin League at the Fenectane Fields; but although his colleague, Æmilius Mamercinus, was successful in the

¹ See pp. 9, 15, 23 above. The principal members of the League of Latin cities who fought in this war were Lanuvium, Aricia, Ardea, Tusculum and Velitræ of the Alban group; Nomentum, Tibur, Pedur, Præneste of the northern group (both the foregoing of old Latin stock); Signia, Setia and Norba of the central mountain group (Volscian border) with the sea-ports Antium and Circeii. With these were allied a group of Campanian cities and two Latin colonies in Etruria. The full list of members of the League will be found in Mommsen's *History* (English translation, 1908 edition) I, 448 n.

actual fighting he undertook, he found it impossible to take Pedum. By his victory, however, Philo drove the war into the fortresses. The third and decisive year saw the Latins on the defensive, depending on the great walled city-fortresses, some of which still survive to impress the modern traveller with their strength. At the request of the senate, the consuls made a special effort to take Pedum. Troops from Tibur and Praeneste were despatched by the Latin direction to hold the city. Others from Aricia, Lanuvium and Velitrae were intercepted by the consul G. Mænius at the crossing of the river Astura, and were brought to battle. His success in destroying and dispersing the army of relief enabled L. Furius Camillus to defeat the Tiburtine troops before Pedum, and to capture Pedum itself.

The fall of Pedum after these two great battles was the end of effective resistance by the Latin league. One by one the fortresses of Latium were reduced; Roman garrisons occupied them. Before he left office Camillus, the son or grandson of the conqueror of Veii, was able to bring before the senate the question of a general settlement of the Latin problem.

Their defeat of the Latins was probably the greatest military deed ever performed by Romans, for it was a case of diamond-cut-diamond, if any instance ever was. The settlement of the problems which arose after the Latin surrender was similarly the crucial instance of Roman statecraft. What Rome then did, settled her own fate for ever, and determined the model upon which her dominion was to grow.

She dissolved the Latin league. She destroyed all the established relationships between the Latin cities, and, in their place, instituted a great and complex system of relationship with Rome. On the other hand, while she did not quite carry out the Latin demand for one commonwealth and one name, she came very near it. Preserving untouched the solidarity and unity of the Roman people, she created a second outer ring of citizens with Latin rights which might easily at any time pass into full Roman citizenship. Considering the age and the place, and the lack of clear precedent and sure experience, the policy of Rome towards the Latin cities was a wonder of wise good temper, and well-planned worldly wisdom. She did her best to retain unimpaired the power of her own single and unified state, but she also did her best to mollify the feelings of

the Latins, and to conciliate them with the gifts of liberty and sympathy. On the whole, she succeeded.

Issues are very seldom quite simple. Cross-currents complicated the Latin settlement. The revolt had been a democratic revolt, fathered by the popular parties of the states of Latium. In most of the cities, the local aristocracies had remained loyal to the old treaty with Rome; and in some cases they had succeeded in keeping their citizens out of the war. Rome gratefully acknowledged their loyalty. The extensive confiscations which took place were thus chiefly at the expense of cities governed by democratic majorities. Not only large proportions of the land of Latin cities, but the rich Falernian district which lay between the southern border of Latium and the river Volturnus – this too went into the pool for distribution, nominally among the Roman plebs. More than one scheme was put into operation for the benefit of overcrowded Rome. Antium was made a colony. Yet here also a good deal of friendliness and conciliation crept into the procedure. The old Antiate citizens were allowed to register as Roman colonists. Generally speaking, nothing was done merely for reasons of sentiment: no love or hate intruded: the only motives admitted were prospects of practical advantage. If success is any proof, these motives were sound.

Thus the plebs had their economic betterment, and the patricians their political security. Roman political dominion, the supremacy of Roman tradition and Roman method, now extended from Southern Etruria to Capua in Campania.

X

The Roman state was brought face to face with what it might itself have been – a Samnite power which was just such an organization as the Roman would have become, had the Latin League been victorious. The Roman dominion was nucleate – composed of an intensely solid and compact body of Roman citizens exercising a hegemony over a number of subordinate city-states similar, but less intense in character. But the Samnite power was a federal league of equal sovereign states. If the principle of equal association was a better one than the principle of hegemony, now was its chance to prove the fact.

The direct contact now begun between the Romans and the

Samnites was the product of a very similar process of expansion. Just as Rome, by the logic of events, expanded her power from the Tiber valley over Latium and into Campania and Etruria, so the Samnites, from the pressure of very similar necessities, extended theirs southward from the mountains of Samnium over the Lucanians, towards the cities of Magna Græcia, and westward down the valleys of Liris and Vulturinus, to the cities of southern Latium and Campania.

An interest attaches to the part played by the Samnites in Roman history, which is due partly to the likeness and partly to the unlikeness of the two types. The Samnite stock was a cousin of the Latin, which it resembled in speech, looks and tradition. But the Samnites had never gone through the mill of an Etruscan training. They were men of the mountains and the upland valleys, whereas the Romans were men of the marshy lowland hollows and the malarial plains. They were men of the rural districts, while the Romans were men of the walled town and close-organized political state. But in certain points of character and racial type, in stern dignity, tough fibre and unbending courage the two were very similar. In these respects, the Romans never met men more like themselves than the Samnites. All this was illustrated by the events of the war which continued – we can hardly say that it proceeded – for nearly seventeen years. According to the Roman account, which is the only one that has survived, it began over the colonization of Fregellæ, through which the Roman government blocked Samnite expansion in the Liris valley; and it extended almost automatically by a series of reciprocal interferences and counter-intrigues, charges, denials, accidents and rivalries. When at last the senate suggested arbitration by a neutral commission, the Samnites did not jump at the offer. They replied, indeed, very truly, that such arbitration would settle nothing. The issue needed to be fought out.

For seventeen years, therefore, we see a shifting and bewildering vision of a war fought with determination on both sides, but hopelessly indecisive. It was full of events; but they were all indecisive events. We see stalk before us the striking personality of L. Papirius Cursor, one of the very first Romans of whom we have intimate anecdote, and close-up view, with his fierce emotional Italian temperament, his emphasis, his

decision, his stern discipline, his athletic achievements and huge appetite. . . . The race of Papirius has by no means died out in Italy. . . . We see the Samnite father, Herennius Pontius, and the son, Gaius Pontius; the mouse-trap which caught the Roman army in the defiles of Caudium; all the long, thrilling story of the surrender and its consequences – a tale which, like the question of Hannibal's march on Rome, presents one of the perennial problems of history.¹ It is a magnificent historical pageant. For fourteen years Rome fought and failed. Then she changed her military system, adopted the Samnite system, and for twenty-two years fought and succeeded. The Roman generals and their legions learnt a new art – the conduct of scientific war. L. Papirius Cursor, by the end of his career, could probably have passed an examination in the geography of Italy which would have amazed his great predecessor, M. Furius Camillus. The Romans acquired not only a new and wonderful system of field-tactics but a definite knowledge of military strategy. This of course reflected a light back upon many important questions of politics and statesmanship. Men who began to realize to the full the military relationship of Rome to the rest of Italy also began to realize her political relationship.

Whatsoever else it taught the Romans, this first long struggle with the Samnites demonstrated that Romans could not destroy Samnite power by military means alone. Such a war might have continued indefinitely without result. It was the political power of Rome, quite as much as her military power, that gave her dominion over others. When the Campanians wished for an improvement in their civic organization,² it was not to the Samnites but to the Romans that they sent their request for advice. Even the far-off city of Teate linked itself with Rome. This spread of a similarity in constitution and tradition was a process of real unification – and it clearly pointed to the spot where Rome had the advantage over the Samnite. She had

¹ For the modern view of the 'Caudine Forks,' see *The Pax Caudina* by E. T. Salmon, *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. XIX (1929), p. 12. Mr. Salmon maintains that the Peace took effect, and Fregellæ was lost to the Romans. In his *Roman Memories*, pp. 99–105, Mr. T. S. Jerome, who knew the ground, contended that no spot existed where the defeat, as described by Livy, could have happened. The Romans lost a straightforward fight, and it is probable that their defeat in this war caused their adoption of the manipular system.

² Livy IX, xx.

more weapons to fight with than military arms. She fought with laws, methods, organization and moral principles.

The first hint of any change in the attitude of the Romans was given when reports of Samnite intrigues with Roman allies caused a crisis at Rome. The existence of a mysterious treasonable conspiracy was widely believed in. A dictator was appointed to investigate the subject.¹ He began at Capua, but so violent was the attack of nerves to which his fellow-citizens had fallen victims, that he presently carried his tribunal back to Rome, and finally resigned, and offered himself also for trial before it. After he had been acquitted without a stain upon his character, the excitement calmed down. The plebeians had brought charges against the patricians, and the patricians against the plebeians, and everybody had expressed his views (usually black) concerning every one else. The supposed traitors had not been identified. As soon as this trouble was disposed of, and the alleged conspiracy faded a little from the public mind, the leading men at Rome began to realize that the time had come for stock-taking.

XI

The censorship of Appius Claudius was the result of this decision for reform and reconstruction. Not for the first or last time, the head of the Claudian house proved to have the moral courage, the systematic thoroughness, and the clear perception necessary to carry through great and unpopular changes. Hardly any man who was wholly dependent upon electoral suffrages could have dared to do what Appius did. He fundamentally altered the property qualifications of the electoral groups and the corresponding liabilities to service in the army. The wealth on which the groups were assessed had always been landed property, 'real estate'; Appius included what the lawyers call personal property, or chattels. This had several results of a nature alarming to some people. A considerable number of rich plebeians whose wealth was of commercial or business origin were suddenly distributed through the higher groups, to the resentment of the stately old landowners who had hitherto possessed these groups in peace. Gross (but rich) vulgarians were everywhere promoted into groups which

¹ Livy IX, xxvi.

hitherto had known them not. Livy himself tells us, with awe, that actually a freedman's son¹, a man whose father had been a slave, was elected *curule ædile*. . . . Appius assessed all these rich men (who in the past had lurked in the lower categories) on their personal property as well as on their – doubtless often very small – landed estate. As a prejudiced patrician, he probably felt great satisfaction in combing out all these plebeian dodgers and shirkers, who had made money while the land-owners fought and paid. His friends, however, did not always appreciate some of the results he produced. All parties united in disliking him – a consequence to which men of his name must by this time have grown accustomed. The consuls tried to ignore his new register. The tribunes tried to get him out of office. Appius defied them all and went on with his work.

By means of the reforms so carried out, the Roman government was enabled to tap fresh resources of men and money, and to reorganize the army upon the new 'manipular' system. Ever since the days of Camillus, Roman military equipment had been changing and Roman military tactics had been taking on a form more perfectly adapted to men of strong character and high intelligence. Now this tendency was consummated by a radical change. The old rigid phalanx was altogether abolished and replaced by an organization made up of many separate companies or 'maniples,' capable at need of independent action. A higher standard of drill and improved discipline were necessary under this new system, which presented a commanding officer with a military machine far more mobile and adaptable than the old. The equipment however was cheaper. The new system was in fact a step forward in the process of training the ordinary citizen to employ his mass power through concerted action. For the first time, universal service, save for the very poorest, became the rule. Appius thoroughly reconditioned the army upon its administrative side, carried out that astounding work, the first Roman road, the Appian Way, and built the first aqueduct, which brought water into the city from Tusculum. His four year's censorship produced a Rome reorganized and ready for another long struggle.

¹ A very nice fellow, apparently, by Livy's account (IX, xlvj).

To this the Samnites could make only one reply; they negotiated a system of alliances which united Samnium, Umbria, Etruria and the Gauls against Rome: in other words, they staked their success upon numbers, while Rome staked hers upon organization. The Roman calculations were well-judged. Appius had produced the men and the money; the military leaders proceeded to use them with deadly effect. Years of practice in long-distance war had taught them their trade. . . . The great chain of mountains which runs down central Italy formed a series of barriers which separated and isolated their foes, and rendered co-operation difficult and imperfect. Rome employed the unity of direction which, as a single compactly organized state, she enjoyed, to strike rapidly in every direction, with her whole strength, while her foes, with their clumsy and diffuse federate structure, were attempting to think and to act. The battle of Sentinum, fought near Ancona, far to the north of Rome, put the Etrurians, Gauls and Umbrians out of the struggle. At Aquilonia, far to the south, Papirius Cursor the younger, the son of the great commander of earlier years, beat the last of the great Samnite armies – a host sworn by the most dreadful oaths never to retreat. The Samnite army was annihilated rather than defeated. Bovianum, the Samnite capital, was captured.

As long as any of the Samnites lived – and the race was not destined to become extinct for some two centuries or so – they were irrepressible enemies of Rome, always ready for trouble. But the power of Samnium as a rival to Rome was broken after the battle of Aquilonia. From that day forward, Rome was the greatest power in the Italian peninsula. The city which the Gauls had sacked had become a force dominating all other forces in Italy, and impregnable to any effort that could be made against her. She had demonstrated her strength by the severest tests of peace and war. Appius Claudius, when he built the first Roman road and the first aqueduct, had set the seal upon Rome's triumph. By those roads Rome was to bind to herself the lands she conquered. By those aqueducts she was to render safe and permanent the city-system on which her power was founded.

XII

The triumph of Rome over the Samnites was not least a vindication of certain political forms which the history of that age had called in question. While Papirius Cursor the elder was fighting and foraying in Samnium, Alexander the Great had fought his campaigns and had died at Babylon. The career of Alexander seemed to hint that certain of the old political forms were dead. The city-state, of which Athens and Sparta had been the most admired models, was in its last stages. The whole drift of events seemed to be away from the city-state. But if this were so, what was the meaning of the defeat of the Samnite federal system by the Romans? It did not occur to contemporaries that they were witnessing the appearance on the large stage of history of a new power organized on the old principles, but destined to transform the old methods into new ones. Step by step, most of the manners and methods of the city-state were to disappear from the Roman system of government – but one thing was to remain – and that was the principle of solidarity and unity for which the patricians had fought: the nucleate state, built round that central core of mutual trust and loyalty which distinguished the Roman state from such rivals as Capua or Syracuse. The existence of this central core was the secret of the strength of Rome. For lack of it, the Samnites had perished.

In spite of the claims of the Samnites that they represented Freedom, it is probable that Italy was happier under Roman suzerainty than ever she could have been under Samnite. Rome's task now was to demonstrate that her victory was justified. All political success has about it a compelling necessity; it can never stand quiet and stable; the more successful it is, the more it is challenged; it must either retreat or go forward; and no matter how mild or humble its pretensions may be, it must in self-defence hurry on to stake out new claims, and to make good new ambitions. Rome had emerged from the welter of small Italian local politics. She brought with her great traditions and the memory of a heroic past. These must now stand the strain of a fiercer and more perilous test than any that they had hitherto experienced. New and mighty rivals were noting her advent

BOOK II

OLIGARCHY

CHAPTER IV

PYRRHUS: THE CONTACT WITH HELLENISTIC CIVILIZATION AND THE DOMINANCE OF THE PLEBEIAN STATESMEN

(280 B.C. – 264 B.C.)

I

The expansion of the Roman dominion during and after the Samnite wars, the colonies founded, the land divided, the trade and business attracted, find their reflection in the pages of Livy. We hear comparatively little more of years of pestilence and famine. When Appius Claudius built the first aqueduct and brought the Tusculan water into Rome, he marked the beginning of a new and better era. Perhaps the old 'two *jugera*' men were not vanishing; but at any rate a new standard of prosperity was being created at the upper end of the plebeian order – as we can see from the proceedings of Appius during his censorship. The flood of rich vulgarians meant – as it always does mean – that men hitherto poor were making money; and when poor men make money, it is wonderful how softened become their political opinions, and how quick they are to dislike proposals for making them poor again.

The problems which had beset Rome had beset the whole of Latium: they had perhaps beset the whole of Italy. There was no less restlessness and revolutionary spirit among the plebs of the Etruscan cities than in those of Rome. A similar kind of moral sickness had spread through the contemporaneous Greek world. The expansion and advance of Rome, though it may not have been achieved without hardship and injustice to individuals, cut through all these seemingly insoluble problems and

hopeless difficulties and discovered a practical way out. Instead of wasting their energies in futile attempts to perform the impossible, the Latin cities now all followed simultaneously in the train of Rome. The weakness of the powerful Greek mind was its tendency to run round and round in a circle. The Roman broke the circle. Just when it looked as if the problems of declining productivity and stagnating commerce might destroy the progress hitherto made by the civilization of the western Mediterranean, Rome, by finding a cure for her own troubles, found one for those of the world at large. Political unification, the *pax Romana*, the driving of roads, the making of colonies, the suppression of local disorder and petty warfare – these were the remedies which came to the whole of Italy as a blessing. Blessings are not always sweet to the taste. Some of the free republican cities made wry faces – but they swallowed the beneficial draught.

The men who led the Romans during this critical phase of their history were a group of statesmen of whom some, like Papirius Cursor, Appius Claudius and Valerius Lævinus, were patrician, but others, such as Decius Mus, C. Fabricius and Manius Curius were plebeian; and it is the plebeian element which gives specific character to the group. The patrician members had the wisdom and the gift for administration which were traditional in their order from the days of the Quintii and Camilli; but the plebeian members betrayed a strange new note – a largeness of horizon, a readiness to contemplate contact with foreign nations and commitments with far-off alien powers, which a little startled the patricians. A touch of something stern and austere distinguished them. A sort of tradition existed in the family of Decius Mus respecting its use of the *devotio*, that curious and rather grim ritual by which a commander formally sacrificed his own life for his followers: while Manius Curius was the hero of that story in which the Samnite ambassadors found him in his cottage, eating turnips – and he made to them that significant remark: 'I don't want gold: what I want is to govern the men who own it.'¹

¹ The narrative of this chapter is based closely upon Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus*, which, drawing upon the lost work of Hieronymus of Cardia, the autobiography of Pyrrhus himself, and the early Roman tradition of Pannius and Fabius Pictor, is of very high authority. It does not seem possible however to follow Plutarch's account absolutely without change. The few

II

The growth of population and industry in the basin of the Mediterranean was everywhere producing the same results. The gradual unification of Italy under Roman rule was but one instance of a process that was similarly unifying Africa under the domination of Carthage, and creating a series of Greek powers of more or less efficiency and stability, ranging from Sicily to Magna Græcia in Southern Italy and thence to Macedon and the Hellenistic kingdoms which had resulted from the break up of Alexander's empire. As soon as all these powers had formed themselves it was inevitable that they would begin to collide and coalesce. Magna Græcia formed a curious problem by itself. The Greek colonies of Southern Italy were very rich and very prosperous, but seemed hopelessly incapable of the kind of common action which ends in political unity. It became ever more and more certain that they would fall into the hands of some power which would impose upon them by force the unity they could not attain by voluntary action. Dionysius of Syracuse had contemplated some such policy. Agathocles, whose dictatorship controlled Syracuse during the period of Rome's Samnite wars, had also cast his eye upon these cities. But Agathocles died, and these wealthy cities continued to drift aimless and unorganized. Rome had taken Neapolis into her own system of alliances. There was, however, a possible alternative to absorption by Rome. Just about this time there began to be signs that the kingdom of Epirus might succeed where Agathocles of Syracuse had failed, and might unite into one great power all the Greek cities of the Adriatic coast, the Ionian sea, and of Sicily. King Pyrrhus was a man fully capable of such a work. He belonged to the circle of men who had been trained in the ideas and traditions of Alexander – and he was by no means the least of them in energy and skill. If his visions were realized, Rome, expanding southward, would come into contact with a thoroughly up-to-date Greek power, not of the old-fashioned Athenian kind, but of the modern Macedonian type.

changes here made are marked in footnotes; and the reader who is dissatisfied may compare the arrangement of the facts in Horns's *Primitive Italy*, Book II, Ch. 4.

The city of Tarentum was the agent by which the purposes of Pyrrhus were brought to cross the path of Rome. Tarentum, feeling its independence threatened by the overshadowing Roman authority, resorted to every plan it could think of – to alliances with the Gauls and to intrigues with the Etruscan cities and with the Samnites. One of the plans was to employ King Pyrrhus as its military commander. As the Tarentines frankly said, they only required competent direction; men and money they could themselves supply. . . . Pyrrhus listened. He saw further than they did into the possibilities of the future. He accepted the invitation.

If they thought that crowds of untrained men and profuse expenditure of money were the material of victory, Pyrrhus knew better. He brought to Tarentum his own professional infantry phalanx, his trained auxiliaries and cavalry, besides twenty war-elephants – one of the Alexandrian novelties which the Macedonians had brought from India. Having entered Tarentum, he showed every sign of intending to remain there. The private plans of Pyrrhus were interesting and extensive – but they depended upon one first indispensable condition, his power to defeat the Romans.

III

The statesmen at Rome had thought and talked long over the problem of their relations to these extra-Italian powers. The war with Tarentum would never have taken place had the choice of policy rested entirely with the senate. The prudence which at all times distinguished the patrician party – even a certain degree of narrowness and prejudice against things foreign – made it reluctant to enter upon adventures; and the senate consequently had refused to plunge. What the senate hesitated to do was done by the Ward Assembly. Under the leadership of the tribune G. Ælius Pætus the Assembly had undertaken the protection of Thurii, and therefore intervention against Tarentum¹; and thus, when Rome was confronted with the consequent threat of war with a first-class Greek power,

¹ Tenney Frank, *Roman Imperialism*, pp. 64–66. The reader who has a list of the tribunes will be able to form a good idea of the identity of the party in power. Ælius was tribune in the consulship of G. Servilius and L. Cæcilius Metellus in 284 B.C.; also in 287, 288, 289 and 294; he was ædile in 291 and consul in 286.

the rank and file of the electors was solid behind the leaders who had advocated this policy. It had reason on its side. The policy of the plebeian statesmen was one of Italian unity under the headship of Rome, and of exclusion of all alien powers: 'Italy for the Italians,' with a sort of Monroe Doctrine attached. When we consider the much greater liberty and protection secured to the individual by the Roman system, we need hardly wonder at this attitude. The tribunes had not fought their long fight merely to present Italy to Greek despots or Semitic oligarchs. A war against Pyrrhus would be a popular war.

The Tarentines had asked for a general: they obtained a master. One of the first acts of Pyrrhus was to close the theatres and to conscript the unemployed young men for his army. The shock to Tarentine feelings was considerable. They had as yet had no experience of a Greek autocrat, with his professional army, his secret police and his free-thinking creed, which enabled him to do anything that seemed to be to his own advantage. Critics and opponents disappeared or were invited to personal interviews with Pyrrhus – a charming man, but quite lucid on the main point; and some found it convenient to go upon their travels. A few anecdotes have survived.

'Is it true,' asked Pyrrhus of a group of young men, 'that you uttered the words reported to me?'

'We were drunk,' explained the tactful spokesman; 'we should have said more if the liquor had lasted longer.'

Pyrrhus smiled and took no steps.

He had not, however, much time to devote to the education of the Tarentines, for the Romans were at hand.

The consul Publius Valerius Lævinus entered Lucania early in the year with an army. Although Pyrrhus had not yet received any very considerable reinforcements from those hundreds of thousands of Italian Greeks of whom Tarentum had so lightly boasted, he felt it necessary to meet the Romans immediately; even if only for the sake of his own prestige. He sent a preliminary note to the consul, inviting the Romans to submit their case to his arbitration, and observing that he had the power to enforce any judgment he might make. This document must have aroused a good deal of interest and curiosity at the Roman headquarters. Lævinus answered

briefly that Rome could not accept him as judge nor take account of him as an enemy. His very presence in Italy was an offence which precluded him from being an acceptable judge. Pyrrhus had expected some such answer; and he now left Tarentum with his own professional army, on which he would have to place his main reliance.

The consul seems to have entered Lucania from Campania and advanced down the valley of the Siris, which falls into the gulf of Tarentum between Thurii and Tarentum. In this way he interposed in defence of the Roman ally. Pyrrhus reached Pandosia and Heraclea to find the army of Lævinus upon the opposite bank of the Siris. Riding along the edge of the river, he had his first actual sight of Roman troops and the famous remark which he is said to have made is the earliest recorded evidence of the impression which the Romans could make upon a foreign observer and a sharp and interested judge. 'There is nothing barbarous in the military discipline of these barbarians,' he said. 'We shall see what they can actually do.' He was so struck by the order of a Roman camp that he decided to await the reinforcements which he had been promised.

His impression that he had any choice in the matter was soon corrected. Lævinus realized the advisability of fighting before the reinforcements arrived, and promptly proceeded to force the passage of the river. The first skirmishes were followed by a general action. For the first time Roman troops faced Greek professional soldiers of the new type, and the manipular system was tried in battle against the phalanx of the Macedonian system.

Seven times, it is said, the Roman infantry attacked the massed pikes of the phalanx. The battle was not decided until Pyrrhus sent forward the elephants. Terrified by their trumpeting and still more by their strange smell, the horses of the Roman cavalry refused to face them, and the Roman wings were thrown into disorder. The supporting Greek cavalry had no difficulty in driving the Roman cavalry off the field; whereupon the legionaries, unable to stand attack in flank as well as the pikes of the phalanx in front, gave way. That they gave way in disorder is proved by the fact that they could not stop, but were driven past their camp, which fell into the hands of Pyrrhus. But they were not destroyed as an organized force.

Though defeated, Lævinus held together the remnant of his army.

The results of the battle of Heraclea were that some of the Samnite cantons and Lucanian cities made terms with Pyrrhus; and Pyrrhus himself was pleased at having defeated a consular army and captured its camp; but these were very limited benefits. On the other hand, the losses of Pyrrhus were extremely serious. Something approaching one fifth of his expensive mercenary infantry were casualties. For Pyrrhus to replace such losses was far more difficult than for the Romans to raise fresh legions.

He had, however, gained freedom of movement. His best chance was to exploit to the full the prestige he had achieved in the eyes of people who could not enquire too closely into the details of his victory. Advancing into Campania, he moved slowly upon Rome, meanwhile sending his minister Cineas to open negotiations with the senate. Cineas was an experienced diplomatist, and was equipped with plenty of suitable presents – not for men alone – with which to smooth his way. If brains could do the work, the military skill of Pyrrhus and the diplomatic arts of Cineas were surely adequate to it.

The advance of Pyrrhus was an effective and dramatic demonstration. He came as far as Anagnia in central Latium. But not a single important Greek city in Campania, or Latin city in Latium, went over to him; and the experience of Cineas in Rome was not very much more favourable. He found many senators by no means disinclined to listen; the patrician party opposed to imperialistic adventures was still considerable and whether or not its members were influenced¹ by the pleasant manners and pleasing gifts of Cineas they were certainly swayed by his arguments. He laid particular stress upon the friendly feelings of Pyrrhus, and the extreme moderation of his demands. He asked nothing more than the independence of the Italian Greek cities and the restoration of Lucania, Samnium, Daunian and Bruttium to their owners. In return, Pyrrhus offered his own alliance, and the return of all Roman prisoners, of which he held about eighteen hundred.

These terms represented simply a request that the senate would accept and make permanent the actual existing circumstances. This, however, was precisely what the opponents of

¹ Zonaras alone of Roman historians hints at this.

the treaty were determined not to do. It would have left Pyrrhus in full possession of nearly all he wanted. The opposition to the treaty was so organized as to culminate in one dramatic moment, when the great Appius Claudius himself, the censor of the year 312, now old and blind, tottered into the senate house solemnly led by his sons, and there made a fierce and incendiary speech which stampeded the opinion of the house. Never, said Appius, should Rome negotiate with enemies who bore arms: no peace with any foe on Italian soil. And these maxims were destined to pass into principles of Roman policy.

Cineas returned baffled. The senate had demanded the withdrawal of Pyrrhus from Italy before any negotiations were begun. Cineas had also seen the military levy, and he described the nature of the human material that would form the new Roman armies.

'We are fighting a hydra,' he said.

Pyrrhus asked what he thought of the senate. The reply of Cineas became famous. 'It is an assembly of kings.'

In the meantime the consul Tiberius Coruncanius had made an agreement with the Etruscans, so that his army was set free. A new army was being raised in Rome; and Lævinus was being reinforced. Pyrrhus was between three armies, each as strong as his own. 'Hydra' was the right word. Since his bluff had failed and nothing else remained to be done, he retreated to Tarentum.

IV

In after years the Romans told a curious story of the visit of G. Fabricius Luscinus, one of the plebeian leaders, to Pyrrhus at Tarentum, to negotiate about the prisoners. Pyrrhus was really interested at getting to close quarters with one of these surprising men, who seemed as remarkable to him as they do to us. He had (so they say) a number of conversations with Fabricius; and although conversations are unsafe evidence, what Fabricius is alleged to have said is worth noticing.

Pyrrhus, whether sincerely or not, said that he could not bear to see a man like Fabricius really poor. He would like to do something for him. There would be no liability on the part of Fabricius to do anything in return, except perhaps help

with a treaty of peace. And if the fact that Pyrrhus was a King made him suspect in the eyes of the senate, he invited Fabricius to be his adviser. He would act by the advice of Fabricius; for he wanted a wise and honest man – and Fabricius would be none the worse off with a rich friend. The two of them together could do great things.

This was the suggestion of Pyrrhus – and he is not the first nor the last man of his type to make such a proposal.

Fabricius said yes – it was quite true about his being poor; but Pyrrhus must not run away with the idea that he had anything to complain about on that score. In Rome, a man's importance had nothing to do with money. Since his fellow citizens believed in him, esteemed him, and elected him their representative, Fabricius enjoyed all those honours which are the real satisfaction of life. While, of course, he had no luxury, it was also true that he did not miss it. All he could do with wealth, if he had it, would be to help other men; and he could do that in any case. He had had plenty of opportunities to make money if he had wanted it: but he had preferred to remain poor as a sign of good faith.

This seems enormously to have interested Pyrrhus, who perfectly understood such a philosophy. As he could not disturb Fabricius along this line of approach, he experimented with another. Knowing that Fabricius had never seen an elephant, he had one concealed in a corner, behind curtains; and at a suitable moment in the conversation the curtains were suddenly withdrawn and Behemoth (evidently quite in sympathy with the whole idea) extended his trunk over Fabricius and trumpeted.

Fabricius was unmoved. 'Your gold does not attract me, and your monster does not frighten me,' he said.

They had him to dinner; and in the course of it Cineas described the philosophic doctrines of Epicurus – the creed that pleasure is the great aim of all human conduct. Fabricius was shocked; but an idea crossed his mind.

'I hope,' he said, 'that you and the Tarentines will continue to believe in these views as long as you are at war with us.'

Before he left, Pyrrhus pressed him to take advantage of the offer he had made.

Fabricius warned him that he was an expert in the art of making himself pleasant to the ordinary man.

'If I come to help you,' said Fabricius playfully, 'your subjects will end by preferring me to you – and where will you be then?'

They parted on excellent terms and Fabricius¹ carried back to Rome these principles, which were the principles of the plebeian statesmen.

V

Pyrrhus spent the winter in preparation. The forces promised by the Greek cities of southern Italy were called up and in the spring he took the field with an army much larger than that which had won the battle of Heraclea, but much less well-trained. He headed for the road-junction at Æcæ, where he could command the routes westward to Campania, north westward to Latium and northward to Picenum. Before he reached his objective he was intercepted and brought to bay by the consuls, Sulpicius Saverrio and Decius Mus, and had to fight upon ground not of his own choosing.

The professional soldiers of Pyrrhus had one characteristic common enough in that age – they believed in magic and the power of spells. They knew that both the father and grandfather of Decius Mus had died on the field of battle by a ritual *devotio* and they sincerely believed that the grandson only had to perform a similar ritual in order to gain the victory for his side. Pyrrhus ridiculed this idea, and an exchange of compliments took place between the two commands. Pyrrhus threatened that if Decius attempted to perform the *devotio*, he would have him caught alive and would make things warm for him. The consuls answered that in their opinion Pyrrhus and his Greeks were not nearly dangerous enough to call for such extreme measures as a *devotio*; and if Pyrrhus would cross the river himself, or let the Romans cross, he would soon see who needed to call upon exceptional measures. So Pyrrhus invited the Romans to cross: and with this the battle of Asculum began.

¹ Fabricius was consul in 278 B.C., two years after this. He had been consul previously in 282 B.C. He was tribune in 291, 287 and 285; ædile in 289, censor in 275. He does not seem to have been prætor. The passage in Plutarch concerning Pyrrhus and the poison conspiracy should be displaced and taken *after* the story of the battle of Asculum.

The fight raged all day. Pyrrhus had been caught on unsuitable ground, where his cavalry could not operate, and where his elephants could not be got up into the front line. Night fell on an indecisive battle. Pyrrhus used the interval to do a little intensive thinking and to rearrange his dispositions. The next morning, by his direction, a special body of storm-troops attacked the Romans on the difficult ground with the object of clearing it and opening the way to a general advance. There was no manoeuvring – it was a punishing hand-to-hand struggle, the Roman sword against the Macedonian pike, for the Romans knew that the elephants were waiting in the rear. Pyrrhus flung himself personally into the struggle and under his encouragement and exhortation the Greeks broke their way through. He was himself badly wounded in the arm by a javelin. The elephants, massed with archers and slingers, now came up and made their onslaught. The Romans had a movable breastwork of carts carrying ironshod poles as a defence against the elephants, but apparently this too was breached, and flight was general. This time, however, the fugitives took refuge in their fortified camp, where they were safe.

The flight of the Romans, and the fact that Pyrrhus held possession of the ground, made it technically a victory for him; but when some one ventured to congratulate him, he merely answered: 'Another "victory" of this kind will about finish me.' Six thousand Romans lay on the field including the consul Decius Mus, but three thousand five hundred and fifty¹ of the best of the trained soldiers of Pyrrhus lay among them – including irreplaceable officers and commanders. The wastage was too serious to be contemplated; whereas the Roman losses hardly counted. Fresh levies filled the Roman camp, and brought the numbers and quality of the legions up to normal.

As for Decius Mus, the exact nature of his death was never ascertained. Whether he made the *devotio* or not, he died, and in any case he would probably have thought the result of the battle good enough for him.

Pyrrhus retreated to Tarentum, there to rest, reorganize and recuperate.

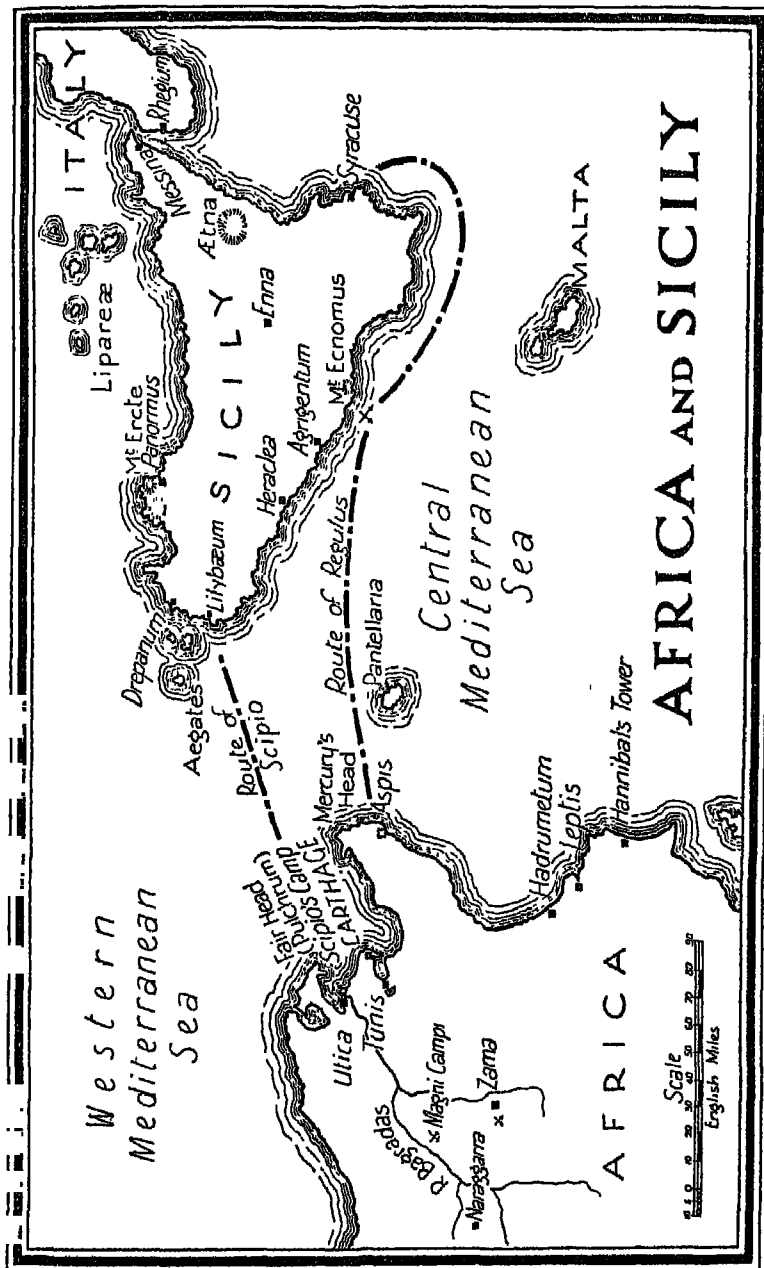
¹ Taking always the figures given by Hieronymus of Cardia – never those given by Dionysius.

VI

Domestic conspiracy now added itself to this dangerous kind of 'victory' to embarrass Pyrrhus. It was discovered in a curious way. G. Fabricius was one of the new consuls, and he received a communication from no less a person than the chief personal physician of Pyrrhus, offering to poison the king for a lump sum down. Fabricius was not the right person to address on a theme of such a sort. He was horrified at the idea. Besides, this was a man whose salt he had eaten. After consulting his colleague, Q. Æmilius Papus, it was agreed by the two that the letter should be sent to Pyrrhus. Tradition has supplied them with a neat covering letter which it would be pleasant to believe that they really wrote: 'You seem to have become mixed concerning your friends and enemies, since you fight decent men and nourish a serpent of this kind. We send you this warning, not out of kindness to you, but in order to defend our own characters.'

Pyrrhus appreciated the action and showed his appreciation by immediately releasing all his Roman prisoners without ransom; as the best way of thanking a man with the mentality of Fabricius. He sent Cineas with them, to see if any agreement could be reached with Rome. The senate, however, was not prepared to fall upon Pyrrhus' neck. As the release of the prisoners was too considerable a kindness to accept from a foe, and too great a reward for merely declining to compound a felony, the Roman government released a corresponding number of Tarentine and Samnite prisoners. No negotiations by Cineas were listened to; no question of peace would be debated until Pyrrhus had left Italy.

All these things made Pyrrhus weary of his Italian commitments, and ready to think of any reasonable alternative. He had made not the slightest progress towards destroying the prestige of Rome and dissolving the great confederacy of which she was the head. If anything, his presence in Italy strengthened it. A little earlier in the year something very significant had happened, which as much marked an era in history as the presence of Pyrrhus himself—the arrival of a Carthaginian fleet off the Tiber-mouth and the presence of a Carthaginian mission in Rome. Between Carthage and Rome a treaty of



Africa and Sicily

alliance was signed, binding each to come to the aid of the other, if called upon, and binding them mutually not to conclude a separate peace with Pyrrhus. More than this – the great Phœnician city undertook the task of advising Rome with respect to the financial organization of the war. Under the tremendous stimulus of the presence of Pyrrhus, Rome was being transformed from a mere passive centre of unity to an active organizing and directing power which bought vast quantities of war supplies for the use of her armies and paid wages to large numbers of citizen soldiers during their periods of service. For the large-scale commercial operations called for by this war, Rome had neither machinery nor even the knowledge of how to construct it. She had not even an adequate coinage. This was now changed. The first Roman silver coinage came into existence. Carthage may have supplied the bullion metal and the principles of policy; the Campanian cities supplied the mint, and the markets for the issue of the coinage. Whether the old patrician landowners could have grappled with such problems we may doubt. The plebeian statesmen are the men during whose supremacy these startling innovations took place.

The senate is not very likely to have attributed the action of the Carthaginians to a purely unselfish motive. Carthage had her own hand to play. Her prolonged effort to turn the western Mediterranean into a closed Phœnician lake was in these days coming very near to success. She had repressed the Greek cities of Gaul and Spain; she had taken possession of Corsica and Sardinia; she was gradually closing her grip upon Sicily. And in Sicily lay the point of peculiar interest for her. Suppose Pyrrhus succeeded in establishing his control of the Italian Greek cities at the expense of Rome? Would not his next step be to extend it to the Sicilian Greek cities at the expense of Carthage? It was therefore very much to Carthaginian interest to ensure that he should be prevented from success in Italy. The action of Carthage was inspired by a wish to make certain that the work of protecting Sicily should be adequately performed by Roman blood and Roman treasure.

But it was altogether a novelty that Rome should have any influence whatsoever upon the fate of Sicily! The world must be shrinking! Once upon a time Rome had dwelt isolated, far

from the madding crowd of civilization. Now she touched the world of Hellenistic civilization on the east; and on the west the world of Phœnician commerce and organization.

VII

Carthage, however, was not destined to have all the chestnuts pulled out of the fire for her by the Romans. This summer another invitation reached Pyrrhus – a call from the Sicilian Greek city of Syracuse for help against Carthage. He reflected; he made up his mind, and he decided to go.

It is the custom to blame Pyrrhus for levity in making his decision; but it is probable that he knew his own business best, and that he could have given conclusive reasons in favour of his change of plan. After the battle of Asculum he felt it useless to continue the struggle with Rome. The wise soldier strikes, not at the strong point of his enemy, but at the weak point. In this case the strong point was Italy and the weak point Sicily. There were infinitely better prospects of military success against the Carthaginians in Sicily, and a few years there might place in Pyrrhus' hands resources which would change the balance of power in Italy. After all, to use the resources of Sicily to conquer Italy was quite as good a plan as to use the resources of Italy to conquer Sicily.

Pyrrhus sailed for Syracuse in the late summer. All his calculations proved perfectly correct. In less than three years he wrested the whole of Sicily from the possession of Carthage, with the exception of Lilybæum, which he could not take. He resolved finally not to beat his head against a wall but to give up the siege of Lilybæum, and strike at Carthage by sea – as Agathocles had done. Meanwhile, the Romans had set with deliberate system about the task of subduing Lucania and the Italian Greek cities. Their progress in this caused an urgent appeal to be sent to Pyrrhus for help. He quite saw that he must maintain his foothold in Italy; and as Sicily seemed quiet, he conveyed his army back thither in the spring of 275 B.C. How much he really did need the help of a man like Fabricius is visible in the result. All the Greek cities of Sicily deserted his cause as soon as his garrisons were withdrawn. Not only had he failed to win them to him personally but his policy had created bitter feeling against him. He evidently had no idea of

the principles by which men grapple to them with hooks of steel the hearts of those they rule. The policy of Rome had created unshakable loyalty among the allied cities under her dominion. Fabricius, perhaps, could have told him why.

Three years of victory in Sicily had restored his confidence and had perhaps made him forget the need for caution in dealing with the Romans. Lentulus the consul was in Lucania with a Roman army, as Lævinus had been six years before. Ignoring Lentulus, Pyrrhus advanced rapidly upon the second army under Manius Curius, which lay at Beneventum, blocking the road into Latium. Curius had taken up a strong defensive position and awaited the arrival of the other consul. He had no intention of fighting alone. So determined was Pyrrhus that Curius should fight alone, that he resorted to the dangerous expedient of a night march. A picked force, with elephants, was sent on ahead of the main body with the object of surprising the Romans. As might have been expected, accidents happened. The division was obliged to make a number of detours; and its lights burnt out, leaving it in the dark, so that it lost its way. When dawn came, the Romans, to their astonishment, perceived the enemy where they had no business to be, close at hand but still on the slopes of the hills. The surprise was mutual. The Romans sprang to arms with some abruptness. The consul hastily performed the sacrifices, declared the auspices favourable, and gave the word to march. The result was that he met and defeated the Greek forces in detail. The picked advance guard of Pyrrhus, after its exhausting night march, was scattered to the winds by the superior numbers of fresh Roman troops, and for the first time elephants fell alive into the hands of the gratified Romans. Pressing on, Manius came to a general action with the main body. Here the struggle was more severe. Although he defeated the Greek infantry, the elephants drove all before them, and pursued the Romans to their camp. The garrison, manning the defences, gave the elephants so warm a reception with missile weapons that the terrible but temperamental beasts turned tail and ran back among their own supports, doing extensive damage. This was the decisive moment. The Greeks never recovered from the confusion so caused, and their last chance vanished. Their defeat was complete and decisive. The battle of Beneventum

destroyed the prestige of Pyrrhus and the power of the Tarentine state.

Pyrrhus had a reputation which must have been largely due to the charming manners and fascinating personality which he revealed in his relations with other men; for it is certain that he never, in his actions, displayed any such signs of military genius as would justify his fame. In all his battles with the Romans he made miscalculations which cost his allies dear. He allowed himself to be caught on difficult ground at Asculum; and the battle of Beneventum he lost largely through rashness and presumption, faults particularly dangerous in the face of a stern cautious commander such as Manius Curius. He is one of those men of whom their enemies speak more highly than their friends. The Roman tradition draws a very attractive picture of Pyrrhus; the Greek, one that is not so attractive.

After the battle of Beneventum, Pyrrhus retired to Tarentum. Although he had resolved to leave Italy and to abandon all further hope of success against the Romans, he broke the news very gently to his Italian allies. He assured them that it was advisable for him to travel in person to Greece to obtain further assistance. When, leaving a garrison behind him to hold Tarentum in his interests, he sailed from Italy, it was for good. He did not mean to return again.

VIII

The triumph of Manius Curius Dentatus was the most wonderful occasion of its kind that Rome had ever beheld. The elephants of Pyrrhus, with towers upon their backs, trod softly through the streets of Rome. It was impossible to doubt that some great milestone in history had been passed.

This year 275 has another claim upon our interest, or at any rate upon our curiosity. It was the year in which Fabricius was censor, and in which he expelled Publius Cornelius Rufinus from the senate for possessing more than ten pounds of silver plate. For Publius Cornelius (who had been dictator the year before) was the ancestor of Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix (another dictator to whose history we shall in due course come). Fabricius had a dislike of Rufinus which was due to a certain dissimilarity in their temperaments. We have seen what kind of man Fabricius, the plebeian statesman, was; we shall hear

the tale of Sulla, and we can form our own opinions concerning the meaning of the episode. Here and now the two types clashed. For some generations the house of Rufinus fell into obscurity, and did not revive again until the type of Fabricius had passed from Roman public life.

IX

After the departure of Pyrrhus it was no longer possible for Tarentum and the Greek cities of Italy to maintain any resistance to the Roman rule. Two or three years were enough to bring all southern Italy into the Roman system of alliances. When, in 272 B.C., the news of Pyrrhus' death was known, the Lucanians and Bruttians laid down their arms. A Carthaginian fleet lay off Tarentum. Its objects were (by its own account) harmless and even necessary; but the consul L. Papirius Cursor took no risks. The offer of especially favourable terms to the commandant of Pyrrhus' garrison induced him to surrender both the citadel and the town to the Romans. Tarentum ceased its career of prickly independence. Rhegium, on the coast overlooking the straits of Messina, was taken; the Picene district came into Roman control. The whole of Italy, in fact, from Rhegium to the Padus, became an Italian alliance under the leadership of Rome.

Italy never had any reason to regret this unification. It became clear that, despite occasional friction, the unification of Italy was a great practical benefit to the country, and that the spirit in which Rome had carried out the work was not likely to have been bettered by any of her possible rivals. The alliance had resisted all attempts to dissolve it and in return had shaken to nothing the ambitious dreams of Pyrrhus. But the story was not yet finished. The Carthaginian fleet which sailed away from Tarentum had been disappointed in the hope of securing a foothold in Italy. Nevertheless, that fleet represented a power much more formidable than Pyrrhus. In solidity, in stability, in patience, in capacity for endurance, Carthage far transcended the Hellenic republics or the Hellenistic kingdoms. The evanescent brilliance of Pyrrhus was not nearly so dangerous as the persistent obstinacy of the Semite.

It was hardly possible that Rome should permanently avoid a clash with Carthage. The patrician landlords of the Tiber

city loved their own narrow lands, and only from necessity and under compulsion raised their eyes to take an interest in foreign countries. But the commerce of Carthage could not live without continuous expansion. Attracted by profitable markets her influence had filled Africa, spread to the islands of the Tyrrhenian sea, absorbed Tartessus in Spain, turned the Tyrrhenian sea into a Phœnician lake, occupied Sicily, and now was feeling towards the Italian Greek cities which would form the most suitable stepping-stones towards a commercial empire of the Mediterranean. If Rome stood in the way, all the worse for Rome.

X

The patrician statesmen of an earlier generation might have turned away from this prospect with an invincible reluctance to face it; but the plebeian statesmen were willing to give it their full attention. When the Mamertines of Messana applied for the protection of the senate against Carthage the senate hesitated. Left to itself, it would have refused. Treaties bound the Roman state, and prohibited it from intervention in Sicily. Here, as in the case of Thurii, the plebeian statesmen once more enter upon the scene. The tribunes placed the case before the electors. Men who were engaged in a perpetual struggle to make ends meet not unnaturally took a view of the matter differing widely from that of the patrician fathers. They considered the matter in the light of Roman interests – and especially their own interests. If treaties prohibited them from considering their interests, it was time to regard such treaties as null and void. Rome had never intended to sign any treaty which injured her. The Assembly therefore gave the senate a mandate – an instruction – to intervene in Sicily.

This was a startling and extraordinary innovation: but it came, not from any aristocratic clique or selfish circle of plutocrats, but from the popular Ward Assembly, the *Comitia Tributa*, the most democratic body recognized by the Roman constitution. To carry Roman arms beyond the confines of Italy, across the water, into a strange land was indeed a revolution; and no one at the moment could say whether it were wise or foolish. It might be the downfall of Roman power; or it might be the opening of a new chapter of Roman greatness. Only the result could decide.

CHAPTER V

HAMILCAR BARCA AND THE CONTACT WITH PHENICIAN CIVILIZATION

(264 B.C. – 219 B.C.)

I

When, in the summer of the year 264 B.C., the consul Appius Claudius crossed the straits of Messina with a Roman army, the history of Rome emerges from the twilight of local Italian politics and local provincial interests, and joins the broad main stream of European history, in the noon-day of the ancient world. She had been a giant among dwarfs, a pike among the minnows. Now she faced other giants – some of them greater and older than herself. The Syracusan army which was watching Messina belonged to the mighty Sicilian power which once, long ago, had been requested by Athens and Sparta to make a third partner with them in resisting the Persian: the power which Gelo and Dionysius, Dion and Timoleon had represented and ruled, and which had defied and broken the power of Athens at her meridian. . . . No one who had seen the crowded, ill-built, malarial city with its broken and ruinous walls by the Tiber floods, and compared it with the vast and magnificent fortress which blazed and glittered beside the deep blue Sicilian waters, would have had any doubt where the greater civilization lay. A few days' journey westward from Syracuse over the narrow sea lay another city, vaster, stronger, more populous, almost as magnificent – Carthage, basking under an African sun, her harbours crowded with huge junk-like merchant ships, long narrow war-galleys, tramp traders, fishing boats and pleasure craft : her great walls impregnable to the military art, her proud merchant princes and haughty bankers resplendent in purple and gold: her pay in the pockets of fierce Spanish infantrymen, swarthy Berbers and Moorish horsemen. The city that had struggled to the headship of Italy was but a

humble rival to Syracuse and Carthage. The latter, in particular, with her granaries full of the enormous harvests of the Bagradas valley, and her warehouses stocked with the products of the central and west African trade, the Spanish, British and Arimoric mines, had resources beside which those of Rome seemed trifling. If Rome, in her contact with such powers, were to survive, it could only be by some resource of a less material kind.

That she did possess some peculiar secret of her own was visible from the first. Carthage, vast as were her powers, seemed unable to focus them upon the matter in hand. Her policy remained vague; her local commanders received no definite instructions, and remained passive while the Roman forces occupied Messina, drove off the Syracusans, and cleared away the Carthaginians from the straits. The Greek population welcomed Rome as a deliverer. The result was an almost immediate change of policy on the part of Syracuse. A remarkable young man, who was destined to leave a great name in history, had very recently risen to the first place in Syracuse. Hiero, with Greek acumen, perceived that the interests of Syracuse would best be served by an alliance with the new Italian power against the Semite. Twelve months after the crossing of the straits, therefore, a historic pact was made. The great Sicilian power entered into one of those treaties which the Romans so well knew how to draw up, and the Roman state took over the responsibilities of Syracuse as the bulwark of the Greek against the Phœnician.

This treaty was the medium by which the Greek world of southern Italy and Sicily, with its wealth, its commerce, its culture, its great tradition and boundless possibilities, was reorganized under Roman leadership, and given the stability and the discipline which it had never been able to acquire of its own efforts.

The first step in this new process of expansion beyond the bounds of Italy was thus not so much a military as a political measure. Rome's foothold in Sicily was secured through the treaty with Syracuse; and she gave Sicily, as she had given Italy, the marvellous and happy relief of a suzerainty adequate to the purpose it was meant to fulfil.

II

For more than two hundred years, Carthage had been slowly advancing in Sicily. Her methods had been crude, but effective. She had from time to time assembled immense armics, wasted them with reckless prodigality, and won small but constant gains by means of an incredible disproportion between the expenditure and the result. By employing this method she had been enabled to dispense with the use of military commanders who possessed the dangerous gift of brains. No intelligence had been necessary. Against the Greek cities this method of attrition had succeeded. It had battered down the Greek intelligence by its brute force, wrecked the Greek subtlety by its clumsy materialism, and drained the limited resources of Greek manhood. Slowly but surely the Greek had been receding. The process met its first sharp interruption when, after two years' delay, Carthage assembled one of her huge armies – a vast host of Ligurian, Spanish and Gallic mercenaries, with fifty elephants – and proposed to invade Sicily with Agrigentum as a base. Her slowness was matched by the vastness of her preparations. But before this great host could be landed at Agrigentum the Romans had full information of the impending invasion, and had prepared an army such as Sicilian Greeks from their own resources alone had never been able to raise. It was sufficiently numerous to deal on equal terms with the Carthaginian garrison of Agrigentum, and it was not inferior in its human material, while in organization it was infinitely superior to a Carthaginian army. It was also much cheaper to maintain. It served from a sense of public duty, in accordance with laws which defined the rights and responsibilities of its component individuals; it was led by public magistrates whose conduct could be scrutinized by their followers, and who were responsible to the Roman electorate; it entered upon a war for which its members had voted, and the justice of which they endorsed. It was paid at a correspondingly low rate, and was equipped without luxuries. If duty, discipline and austerity could be estimated in money, all the wealth of Carthage could not have purchased mercenary troops equal to the citizen soldiers whom Rome placed in the field at comparatively slight expense. The political virtues can be a valuable form of revenue.

The Roman consuls invested Agrigentum and blockaded the town and the Carthaginian garrison with lines of circumvallation. After five months' siege the condition of the city became desperate. The sea, however, was still open. The great Carthaginian army at length was landed at Heraclea and advanced to relieve Agrigentum. It was the first serious meeting of Carthaginian and Roman armies. After a long and ferocious struggle, the citizen-troops broke the mercenaries and routed them. Little quarter was given. The elephants and the rich Carthaginian camp fell into the hands of the victors. During the night after the battle the garrison of Agrigentum quietly evacuated the town. Agrigentum was sacked, and the inhabitants sold as slaves, to warn Sicily that it was not well to be associated with Carthage.

The battle of Agrigentum revealed to Carthage that the process of attrition which had been so successful against the Greeks would not serve against the Romans. The latter could not be worn down. They would have to be fought down. This was a very serious fact for Carthage. It implied that she might have to adopt the distasteful expedient of appointing generals with brains – the sure precursor of revolution. Matters had not quite reached this pass. The naval power of Carthage still remained; and while it existed there was an alternative to fighting Rome on land. As long as Carthage retained her command of the sea she could hold all the coast line of Sicily that could be conveniently approached by water and therefore could dominate the interior: and there was very little likelihood that her sea-power could be broken. The Roman victory at Agrigentum, therefore, was to a large extent illusory. The real power of Carthage – her sea-power – had not even been touched.

III

The senate contemplated these facts, which were probably impressed upon the Roman commanders by Hiero. Up to the present Rome had not been a naval power, and had indeed troubled herself very little over such problems. If she had taught the Syracusans certain important truths, it is certain that the Syracusans acknowledged the benefit by teaching the Romans those principles of sea-power on which Syracusan strength had largely rested. Syracuse, like Athens, had been a

naval power: and unlike Cumæ or Tarentum, she remained one. With the kind of encouragement which Rome could give, Syracuse was still capable of putting a powerful fleet upon the sea. She could do more than this. She could supply pilots, instructors and sailing masters to train and manage vaster fleets than she herself could build or keep in commission. A combination of Roman direction and leadership with Syracusan training and methods might be a fruitful one.

All these prospects and suggestions were strange and novel to the Roman *patres*: but the principles of leadership are the same on land and water, and the senate resolved that it would grapple with Carthage upon her own element. Strange legends were afterwards related concerning the methods by which Rome built her first fleet: but the main facts are clear enough. Rome mobilized the maritime knowledge of her Italian and Greek subjects, and utilized it. Warships of the accepted standard tonnage were designed and built. Crews were signed on from the Greek ports; oarsmen were trained; troops were drilled to fight on board ship; pilots were picked. Two years after the battle of Agrigentum the Roman fleet – a Greek fleet directed by Roman commanders – fought its first battles with the Carthaginians. The Phœnician pilots, trained in the system which the Athenians made famous – the ram-and-sink system which employed the whole ship as a missile weapon – were beaten by the Romano-Syracusan method of board-and-capture. The Roman directors did not trust everything to their new trained oarsmen or their Greek pilots: they relied upon the Roman infantryman, and upon a system of throwing on board a boarding-party outnumbering the fighting crew of the Carthaginian ships. The success of the new fleets was sufficient to warrant the building of a much larger number of ships, and the drafting of plans for an invasion of Africa. Only one way existed of defeating the Carthaginian, and that was to strike straight at Carthage.

Four years were spent on the building of the great fleet and the training of the personnel. At the end of that time an immense armada gathered in Syracusan waters. It consisted of a convoy of fighting ships covering a fleet of transports which carried an expeditionary force for Africa. The war was to be continued on African soil, if the passage could be effected.

While the Roman fleet was collecting, the Carthaginian defending fleet took up its station off Mercury's Head, the great promontory that from south of Carthage projects far to sea towards the western point of Sicily. From this position the commander could watch both the northerly and the southerly Sicilian coasts. As soon as he was assured that the Roman fleet was coming by the southerly route, he put to sea and crossed the strait to Lilybæum, whence he coasted slowly south-eastward, finally pausing and fixing his headquarters at Heraclea Minoa, a few miles west of Agrigentum. Meanwhile the Roman fleet had come to Ecnomus, not much more distant from Agrigentum on the eastward. Both sides made ready for a decisive fight.

The battle of Ecnomus was the greatest sea-battle which was ever fought by Romans. Their fleet was drawn up in a wedge formation, with the horse-transport towed after the rearmost line at the base of the triangle. The Phœnicians, employing their greater speed and manœuvring power, concentrated their attack upon the two rear angles of the Roman formation, where it was weakest, and for a time the struggle was doubtful. Then the big Roman ships of the vanguard, having dispersed the Phœnician centre, returned and plunged into the battle. This clustering and concentration of ships was all to the disadvantage of the Phœnicians, who had not adequate space for their ram-and-sink tactics ; and it was proportionally advantageous to the Romans, who crowded and grappled and boarded as fast as they could lay alongside their foes. At last the outer, or southerly wing of the Carthaginians sheered off and stood out to sea. It had had enough. The inner, or northerly wing, penned in against the land, was sunk or captured. Twenty-four Roman ships were sunk during the battle, but none were taken: while the Carthaginians, on the other hand, lost thirty sunk, while sixty-four were taken.

What was left of the Carthaginian fleet retired upon its base and took station to guard the harbours of Carthage, on the supposition that an immediate attack on Carthage by sea would follow. As soon as the Roman fighting ships had refitted, they crossed to the African coast and assembled off Mercury's Head. Under their watchful guard, the transports landed a Roman army of twenty thousand infantry and five hundred

cavalry on the coast of Africa, under the command of the consul M. Atilius Regulus.

IV

On all these events the Carthaginian government could only look with a kind of paralysed impotence. Africa had enjoyed for many years an entire freedom from foreign invasion. The one exception, the expedition of Agathocles, had been an unconvincing adventure, in the success of which no one had ever really believed. The Roman invasion was different. It was supported by vast resources and a strong government. The mere presence of Regulus – let alone a few military successes which he promptly won – seemed to destroy the prestige of Phœnician government and to dislocate its administration. Carthage was soon crowded with starving refugees, and her own supplies were short. The distracted council of Carthage hardly knew whither to turn in an emergency so extraordinary. It was not used to emergencies. War was quite a different thing when it involved the home land of Carthage and the estates of its great men.

Regulus, realizing the state of opinion on the Carthaginian council, proposed terms: and if he could have made the terms sufficiently easy, they might, in the circumstances, have been accepted. But Regulus, from one cause or another, overshot his mark. Possibly he mistook the character of the men he was dealing with. His proposed terms were so severe that the Council – which was composed of selfish and self-seeking men, but not of cowards – at once rejected them, and looked round for a different policy. It was – in the urgent circumstances – absolutely necessary to employ brains. Nothing else would act with sufficient quickness.

The spectacle of the Carthaginian council resolving itself into a Committee of Public Defence might have made Alexander smile. It certainly had that effect upon a Spartan named Xanthippus, who had taken service among the mercenary troops raised by the city. His remarks seem to have been unusually effective, for they passed from mouth to mouth among his Greek friends and at last were reported to the Council. Called in front of the august body for this breach of discipline, Xanthippus defended and explained his criticisms.

The Council was in earnest; it caught his meaning; it took him seriously; and Xanthippus accepted on the spot the task of reorganizing the Carthaginian military forces on the lines he had indicated. They had asked for brains. Here they were!

A Spartan, like a Prussian, possessed a natural gift for military science which training made the most of. Xanthippus had seen that the Carthaginians, though they employed war elephants, were merely imitating by hearsay a model the operation of which they had never actually witnessed. Even their elephants – a north African variety, then still found in the Atlas – were the wrong kind, and were imperfectly trained. Xanthippus set to work to train the Carthaginian army on new lines, instructing it in a system of field operations which roused the enthusiasm of his men. When he took the field, a change, of which the Romans were unaware, had come over the Carthaginian force. The mercenaries were so confident in their new tactics that they insisted on fighting; and Xanthippus gave them their wish.

The arrangement of the Carthaginian army, though simple, was carefully calculated. Xanthippus drew up his phalanx in the centre, headed, some distance forward, by the elephants. His cavalry were distributed on either wing. Regulus walked into the trap blindfold. To strengthen himself against the elephants he deepened his files, with the result of narrowing his front,¹ so that the possibility of enveloping the Romans was greatly increased. But it was the operation of this military machine which constituted its effectiveness.

As soon as the battle began the elephants charged the Roman centre, and having resistance against which to exercise their power, they held the Romans immobile and threw them into disorder. The cavalry wings of Xanthippus meanwhile drove the weaker Roman cavalry off the field, after which they wheeled inwards and enveloped the Roman centre, attacking it from the flanks and rear. Completely surrounded and now unable to manœuvre, most of the Romans either perished or

¹ He should have deployed his front, and widened the intervals between the files. See Scipio's dispositions at Zama, in Ch. VIII below. The trick which was worked on the Romans consisted of inducing them to crowd their files – the same trick afterwards worked on them though by different means by Hannibal at Cannæ. This crowding completely neutralized their disciplined mobility.

surrendered. A body of two thousand reached the fortified camp at Aspis, and these were the only men who escaped from the battle.

At a single stroke, Carthage was free from the deadly hold that had been forcing her to the ground. But more was to come. The fleet which Rome sent to bring away the survivors was caught near Camarina by a fierce storm, and out of three hundred and sixty-four ships only eighty survived it.

V

It was a long time since the Romans had suffered reverses of this kind. They had been able, in earlier times, to save their faces by denying their misfortunes; but Rome was now too great and powerful, and stood too much in the glare of publicity, for this any longer to serve. The worst of the mischief was not the damage to Rome – she could survive it – but the encouragement to Carthage. Even though the Romans captured Panormus as a set-off to the defeat of Regulus and the loss of the fleet, the Carthaginians were too excited at their own successes to be worried by their troubles. Ships were fitted out; the Sicilian command was reorganized; the war began afresh. They were well-advised. Another Roman fleet was caught in a storm, a hundred and eighty ships were lost, and the senate called a halt. It refused to build more ships in view of these disasters. The war must be conducted in a more economical way.

After eight years of experiment as a naval power, therefore, the senate definitely renounced the policy. The Greek advisers fell from power. It was resolved to depend, as of old, upon the legionary soldier and the solid earth. After four more years of unsatisfactory fighting, with no very precise results to show for it, the senate once more wavered. The war had now become a struggle for Lilybæum which produced as many thrilling stories as the struggle for Troy, and threatened to last as long. Not even the Greek pilots of the east coast could compete with the Phœnicians when it came to the individual handling of the ships. Again and again the blockade-runners found their way into the dangerous harbour of Lilybæum, and out once more. Of these blockade-runners a certain Hannibal ‘the Rhodian’ was the most famous. The Romans determined to try the sea again, and to seek there the decisive battle which

certainly seemed to elude them by land. Another fleet was organized. Half of it was thrown away by the culpable mismanagement¹ of Publius Claudius, who allowed himself to be outmanœuvred at Drepanum. The other half, on the way to Lilybæum, was blown upon a lee shore, and completely destroyed.

This was too much. Again the senate abandoned the policy of naval supremacy. The war dragged on. Lilybæum was still besieged, and still defended; but the Carthaginians were growing in hope and in confidence. They resolved once more to run the risk of using brains. They had recovered the mastery of the sea. Now it was possible to recover that of the land: and Hamilcar was given charge of the operations.

He came at a critical moment. The serious losses of material and of men which Rome had sustained – the census in that year showed a drop of over forty-six thousand in the electoral roll – had reduced her efforts almost to nil. If the war could be dragged on for a few more years, Rome might sign a peace on the basis of both parties holding what they had – and that would mean, in practice, that the possessions of Carthage in Sicily would not be seriously smaller than when the war began. As Carthage had hardly suffered at all from the wear and tear of hostilities – which had fallen almost wholly upon her mercenary troops, not upon her Phœnician citizens – she would in that case have kept the substantial part of her possessions, and fought Rome to a standstill, and she could reasonably feel that all the hope of the future was with her. She would have done to the Romans what she had done to the Greeks – ground them down by sheer patience. She could resume her advance at her leisure.

It looked very much as if this programme might be fulfilled. Hamilcar settled himself upon the natural stronghold of Mount Ercte, not far from Panormus. There he began to train a new army, different from the old Carthaginian armies that had been hired for the occasion as if they had been furniture-removers or

¹ Publius had the Phœnician admiral Carthalo securely bottled in at Drepanum, but by gross negligence he omitted to secure the second entrance of the harbour. Carthalo seized the chance, made a sortie, attacked the Roman fleet while it was entering the harbour, and inflicted a disastrous reverse upon it. Publius was put on trial for this – one of the rare instances in Roman history.

house-decorators. For six years he held Ercte. His object was to weary out and exhaust the resources and patience of Rome, and to force a tolerable peace during which he would reorganize the Carthaginian armics and see that the wealth of Carthage was properly used for the right purposes.

Other people besides himself saw the possibilities. The war had lasted twenty-two years: the Roman senate was silent – the tribunes had nothing to say. None of them dared suggest a further outpouring of money and life on an object so remote and unlikely as the defeat of Carthage. Private enterprise came to the rescue. A subscription was started: what we should call a company was formed. The capital subscribed was to be looked upon as a loan, to be repaid to the shareholders in the event of victory. Ships were built: unusually good ships. The material was inspected and the workmanship criticized by the men who were paying for it. When all was finished, a complete fleet, fully manned and equipped, was presented to the government. If it failed – then Rome was destined to remain an obscure Italian power, and her appearance on the stage of world politics would prove transient.

The fleet sailed for Lilybæum, under the command of G. Lutatius Catulus. It was a last desperate throw; but it succeeded. At the famous Battle of the Ægates the Roman fleet defeated the Carthaginian relief fleet, sank fifty ships, captured seventy, took ten thousand prisoners, and determined for ever the course of history.

The Carthaginian government had entrusted Sicily to Hamilcar Barca; and it could not make any undertakings against his will. When however the decision was left to him he decided for peace, and opened negotiations with Catulus. The battle of the Ægates had altered the state of affairs. Hamilcar saw that for his purpose much more extensive changes of policy and method would be necessary, and much more complete reorganization, than he had planned to carry out. He consented to evacuate Sicily and to pay a heavy war indemnity.¹

¹ The terms were (1) Evacuation of the whole of Sicily by the Carthaginians; (2) no war to be made on Hiero, the Syracusans, or their allies; (3) surrender of all Roman captives; (4) a sum of 2,200 talents to be paid to Rome in twenty years.

The Assembly objected, and raised the sum to 3,200 talents payable in ten years, together with the cession of all islands between Sicily and Italy. (Polybius, I, 62–63.)

This was the result, so far, of the great adventure – or rather, it was the situation when the first chapter of the great adventure closed and the second began.

VI

Let us for a moment follow the fortunes of Carthage rather than those of Rome.

One of the first tasks of the Carthaginian government was to get the army of Sicily demobilized. It had run great risks in adopting, under the pressure of necessity, the policy of employing Brains, and it was anxious to divest itself of the dangerous responsibility as quickly and as completely as possible. Its first act, therefore, was to get the new and specially-trained Sicilian army away from its creator. But cunning without brains is a blundering thing. The idea was to pay off the army under such circumstances that it should feel that Hamilcar had duped it, and that the only money it did get came from the virtuous and noble Carthaginian government. The government therefore ordered the troops to Carthage. But though the Sicilian forwarding officers, knowing the material they were handling, sent the troops to Carthage in separate detachments, some bright person at the receiving station reunited them in a single camp, where they had ample means and leisure to talk.

They soon had reason to talk. The government made it quite clear that it would not fulfil the undertakings given by Hamilcar. Had the troops been isolated in small detachments, it might conceivably have been possible to persuade them that Hamilcar was the person to blame; but the collected body could not be hoodwinked in this way, and proceeded to hold the government responsible. The only blame they laid at Hamilcar's door was that he had stood aside and allowed them to be robbed by the authorities. Armed revolt followed.

The strange and bloodstained story known as 'the Revolt of the Mercenaries' is a part of Roman history because, besides illustrating the manners and customs of the non-Roman world surrounding Rome, it was an integral part of the process by which Hamilcar rose to power. The Carthaginian government had let loose a force over which it had no control. In ferocity and recklessness the mercenaries had nothing to learn from the desperadoes of later ages. Carthage was soon fighting for her

sheer existence against foes far more to be feared than Romans. The Carthaginian himself moreover was not a fighting man. He was an organizer, a planner, a leader; he paid other men to fight for him. His course seemed run when his tools themselves turned against him.

For the third time it was necessary to resort to the use of brains. Where was Hamilcar?

Hamilcar was in a curious position. As soon as the army had been goaded into revolt, he, its creator, had been put on trial as the author, through his Sicilian policy, of the whole trouble. His safest defence had lain not in any reply to the charge, but in his influential connections, particularly his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, and in the fact, which day by day became plainer, that he was the only man capable of repressing the revolt. He was not exonerated; his enemies were strong enough to secure so much; but under stress of necessity the charges were dropped for the time. Hamilcar at once set to work. He had much of the military genius which his famous son showed in after years. He soon organized an army, out-manceuvred the revolted troops, and defeated them in the field. To his prisoners he was generous, though firm. He gave them the alternatives of re-enlisting with him, or of being sent home; but if they elected the latter course the penalty for again being taken in arms against Carthage was death. This policy of hard fighting and leniency would almost certainly have brought the war to a speedy end; but here the reputation of the Carthaginian oligarchy complicated matters.

The leaders of the mutineers realized that most of the men under them would gladly accept such terms, and that the army would dissolve, leaving them to the mercies of Carthage – the nature of which they knew only too well. Whether rightly or wrongly, the repute of the Carthaginians was that no pledge or guarantee would bind them. The reply of the ringleaders was therefore to involve their followers in such deeds of blood and barbarism that reprisals would be provoked. Hamilcar's policy of leniency was made impossible, and the last stages of the war were one of those nightmares of ferocity and cruelty which the climate of Africa seems to have a peculiar power to create. Crucifixion, cannibalism, and the throwing of prisoners to the elephants were the features of the last stages of the struggle.

When the revolt of the mercenaries was finally stamped out in blood, it had lasted three years and four months, and had been fuller of deeds of evil and cruelty, thinks the Greek historian, than any other on record.

VII

The senate had looked upon these events with a certain real sympathy and friendliness towards Carthage — or rather, towards the abstract principles of public order and law. As long as legally constituted authorities were wrestling with violence and rebellion, Rome supported them. Roman subjects were forbidden to trade with the revolted mercenaries. When the rebellious city of Tunis and the revolted island of Corsica wished to place themselves in Roman hands, Rome refused. But as soon as the rebellion was crushed, the policy of Rome was changed. While she was confronted with a contest between civilization and anarchy she sided with civilization, whether Roman or Carthaginian: but when she had to choose between two forms of civilization, Carthaginian and Roman, she felt free in conscience to go far in support of the Roman.

Although, to men like Hamilcar, the results of the great war might seem but a temporary arrangement, Rome developed their logical consequences in a way which showed that she thought them permanent. The conquest of Sicily had been followed by the embodiment in the peace-treaty of a cession to Rome of all the Liparian islands. An irresistible logic now suggested that Sardinia and Corsica belonged to the same sphere of influence. Even their geographical position seems to mark them out as Italian. When Roman officers coolly took possession of Sardinia, Carthage protested and prepared for war, but hastily backed out when the senate promptly took her at her word. Not being prepared for war, Carthage was obliged to give up Sardinia and to pay a further heavy indemnity. It was a bitter pill. Hardly even the loss of Sicily affected the Carthaginians more deeply than the loss of Sardinia. Sicily had been wrested from her in war; but the verdict of war can be an honourable one, and to be defeated may be no disgrace. Sardinia, however, was jockeyed out of Carthaginian hands in a way especially wounding to the pride of those concerned. Almost for the first time the Carthaginians realized the

meaning of humiliation. They remembered the episode with a vindictive resentment out of all proportion to the degree of the material injury that had been inflicted upon them.

Corsica was seized not long after Sardinia and the possession of Corsica inevitably suggested, in turn, the desirability of including the northerly part of the Italian peninsula up to the Alps within the Roman dominion. The Roman advance went on continuously, without any great general war, during the years that followed the conquest of Sicily. Step by step the boundaries of Roman rule were carried to the Alps. The Gallic lands in the valley of the Padus had not the coherence of the old civilized country of Sicily: much was yet semi-tribal: there was neither united resistance nor general surrender, but a piecemeal struggle of which the results were irregular and various. Nevertheless, the gradual creation of the province of Cisalpine Gaul was the distinguishing feature of the years following the first Punic war. Colonies were founded, with varying fortune. It was a rough, semi-barbaric country, whose great future was still a long way off.

The contact of the Romans with the Adriatic cities – Ariminum, Brundisium, and the like – gave them, for the first time, an interest in the pirate strongholds that lined the mountainous coast of Illyria. Measures to protect their new subjects, and to repress the pirates, involved them in an Illyrian war. And all these extensions may be reckoned the natural, inevitable result of the first step across the straits of Messina. The moment Rome extended her interests beyond the mainland of Italy she could not stop until she had found stability again. She could not avoid the inevitable chain of events by which she was led to attach to herself successively, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Cisalpine Gaul and the coast of Illyria. The future would show whether any further necessity, not yet apparent, would draw her into still wider and wilder adventures.

One peculiarity of the case deserves to be noted. The 'nucleate state' did not organize her new conquests about her on exactly the same terms as the earlier. Italy and the Italian federation showed signs of becoming, in turn, a new Nucleus, gathering round itself a new ring of inferior associations. The Sicilian and Sardinian did not fight in the armies of Rome – he merely paid taxes in lieu of personal service.

VIII

In the meantime, Roman history was being prepared far from Rome, by a man who sincerely hoped that Rome would have little more history. As soon as the war of the mercenaries had reached its end, Hamilcar decided that as brains were no longer in demand at Carthage, he would employ his own elsewhere. How and from what source he acquired the capital is not known – but he raised an army and crossed into Spain. Much uncertainty exists concerning the precise relation which Hamilcar and his successors bore to the Carthaginian government at Carthage. In all probability it never was exactly defined. His original status in Spain was probably very much the same as that of Cortez in Mexico or Pizarro in Peru. It rapidly grew, however, into something widely unlike theirs. Turning his back on the old Phœnician colonies of Bætica – the ‘Tarshish’ which we know so well by name – he pushed up the valley of the Bætis, crossed the watershed and descended the valley of the Tader till he reached the shores of the Mediterranean. There, in one of the richest silver-mining countries known to antiquity, Hamilcar proceeded to found what might be called a kingdom, if he had ever been crowned, or a colony, if it had ever owed allegiance to a motherland. For nine years he fought and founded and organized. He built a capital at the spot which the Greeks called *Acra Leuca*, and the Romans *Castrum Album*, or *Lucentum*. The silver which Hamilcar exported to Carthage revolutionized the situation there, restored Carthaginian prosperity, started her upon a new era of commercial expansion and made him the most influential of her citizens: while the treasure which he retained financed a magnificent army and a gradually extending administration. Hamilcar, from his distant base in Spain, surrounded by his faithful friends, ruled Carthage. The oligarchy might hate his name and disclaim his actions; but they found it necessary to obey him. It was Hamilcar’s silver which paid the war indemnity.

The deeds of Hamilcar were known far and wide – as far (we may believe) as *Massilia* and *Emporia*, which viewed with concern the expansion of his power. In 231, when he had been established some seven years or so, a Roman embassy appeared and wished to enquire into his proceedings. It was graciously

received by an urbane host, and seems to have found nothing to object to.

Hamilcar never lived to be an old man. He can hardly have achieved middle age. His death in 229 found his son Hannibal far too young to undertake responsibility, so his successor was the son-in-law, Hasdrubal, whose influence had originally saved him from his enemies after the war with Rome. Hasdrubal, by all reports, was an able administrator and a famous man. Under his direction the power of the Spanish Dictator spread and was consolidated. He abandoned Acra Leuca for a finer and safer capital at New Carthage, close to the silver mines. Young Hannibal, Hamilcar's son, was educated under his care. New Carthage rather than old Carthage seemed to be the coming power. It was with Hasdrubal, not with the old oligarchic Council at Carthage, that the Romans arranged their treaty of delimitation, under which it was agreed that the Ebro should be the northerly limit of Hasdrubal's government.¹ When Hasdrubal died, and Hannibal succeeded to his authority, there was a certain sense that a great power had come to an end. No one quite expected Hannibal to rise to the standard of Hamilcar and Hasdrubal. There could not be three such men !

IX

The accession of Hannibal seemed to afford a favourable opportunity for Roman intervention. Probably it was from the Greek merchants that the original warning impulse came, which aroused the Romans to look narrowly upon the Spanish power at New Carthage. A vague suspicion was stirring; an uneasy expectation that as yet had no definite shape. It was most likely some anticipation of a Carthaginian advance into Gaul that moved the Massilians. The trade routes up the Garonne and the Loire saved the dangerous sea-journey round Spain, and would be a valuable addition to the resources of the Spanish dictator. The senate, brushing aside the question of hypothetical aims and objects, went direct to the heart of the matter by accepting the office of arbitrator in a dispute which had arisen in the Spanish city of Saguntum. As Saguntum

¹ J. S. Reid: *Problems of the Second Punic War*, J.R.S., III (1913), pp. 178-179.

was well south of the Ebro, this was a definite challenge to young Hannibal. The world watched.

Hannibal betrayed nothing of his plans or his preparations. He protested against Roman interventions at Saguntum, and gave indefinite hints of an intention to impose his own decisions upon the city. The senate had no evidence before it that any very energetic action was required. Such messages and petitions as came from various pro-Roman sources in Spain and Gaul had very much the air of being mere nervousness and fussiness. Nevertheless, a commission was sent to New Carthage. In a conversation with Hannibal the commissioners reminded him of the bar to his passage of the Ebro, and cautioned him against any action with respect to Saguntum. Hannibal merely repeated his protest. He did this in a way which suggested to the commissioners the prospect of some local war. How completely he duped them we can see by the fact that they continued their journey to Carthage. They had already spoken to the principal – but this they did not realize: and in fact the Romans never perfectly realized it.

His own couriers had reached Carthage first, and had already begun to pull the strings. The picture which they drew, of the cynical and hypocritical aggression of the Romans and the groundlessness of their claim to interfere at Saguntum – this profoundly moved public opinion. Hannibal's plans had long been laid and his intentions fixed. All he needed now was the assurance of a united front. He would need all the help and support he was likely to get, and he could afford to throw none away. His diplomacy over Saguntum brought the majority of Carthaginians over to his side. The minority of determined enemies he would need to chance. As the critical moment approached, he knew more and more certainly that the largest number of advantages he would ever possess – this side of victory – were now in his hands. His army was in perfect fighting form; his treasury was full; his foes were asleep; his friends were numerous. The time was at hand.

CHAPTER VI

HANNIBAL, THE INVASION OF ITALY, AND THE DOMINANCE OF THE POPULAR LEADERS

(219 B.C. – 216 B.C.)

I

Early in the year 219 B.C. – ‘just before summer’ says Polybius¹ – Hannibal laid siege to Saguntum. He intended to enter upon his approaching war with Rome in circumstances as favourable to himself as possible; and this meant the rigid suppression of rebellions and disaffection in Spain, the complete assertion of the prestige of his own government in the eyes of friend and foe, and a little tactful distribution of the spoils in suitable quarters. The Romans were not worrying themselves. The consul L. Æmilius was preoccupied with an Illyrian expedition, and the senate was not expecting the sky to fall. The siege of Saguntum proved a somewhat long one: but since it was pressed to the bitter end and the Romans sent no relief, the result was inevitable. After ten months of siege Saguntum was stormed, and fell into the hands of Hannibal.

The Romans, who had made not the slightest effort to send help to Saguntum in her troubles, now awoke and proceeded to deliver an ultimatum at Carthage, demanding the surrender of Hannibal and the restoration of Saguntum. The address was the wrong one. Even the bitterest opponents of Hannibal resented the Roman demands, and some angry cross-talk took place. The oligarchic party pointed out that the Romans had dealt direct with the Barcid government of Spain, and accordingly might now lodge their complaints there. Why should the old government of Carthage be held responsible for breaches it had not committed in a treaty it had not signed? As for the main peace treaty which Catulus and Hamilcar negotiated – neither Carthage nor New Carthage had broken that. The

¹ III, 16.

Roman delegation, however, had its instructions. It made no reply to these unanswerable contentions, but it served notice upon Carthage that from this date a state of war began.

Hannibal's preparations were complete. He left his brother Hasdrubal in charge of Spain, and at some time in the early summer – May or June – he crossed the Ebro with a large army. The impression produced upon the world by his actions was that he proposed now, in direct defiance of Rome, to occupy and annex the lands north of the Ebro, over which Rome, by her treaty with Hasdrubal, had extended her protection.

The modern reader, wise after the event, knows that Hannibal's intelligence department had made the most careful enquiries concerning a land route across the Alps, had mapped and arranged an itinerary, and had made agreements with the tribal governments along and at the end of the route. A complete scheme had been organized for the invasion of Italy from the North. But this was far from being obvious to Hannibal's contemporaries. As far as they knew, all that was happening was a Carthaginian occupation of Northern Spain and an expedition into Gaul. To explain the raid into Gaul was quite easy. The Carthaginians were always thinking of the western trade, and this was a golden opportunity for seizing control of the trade routes leading from the valleys of the Garonne and the Loire to the Mediterranean. Hannibal counted on such interpretations as these being put upon his actions when, in the middle of summer, he dismissed the greater part of his army and with a picked force of thoroughly trained troops he crossed the Pyrenees into Gaul.

II

As soon as the Roman ultimatum had been delivered at Carthage, preparations were made for a war on two fronts. The consul Tiberius Sempronius Longus was to start with the main army from a Sicilian base, striking at Africa itself; while his colleague, P. Cornelius Scipio, proceeded to the Ebro. Scipio set out by the usual coastal route from Pisa, which took him to the Rhône mouth, the Rhône crossing, and the regular road into Spain by Narbonne. It was quite possible that he might meet Hannibal, who was known to have crossed the Pyrenees. In any case, his duty was to police the Roman sphere of

Sketch Map III



The Route of Hannibal

influence in Gaul and Spain, and to protect the interests of so old a Roman ally as the Greek commercial city of Massilia. The actual news which met him was startling and sensational. Hannibal was already at the Rhône crossing and was ferrying over a large and business-like army, including elephants. It was four days before Scipio himself could reach the crossing, and by then the Carthaginian army, Hannibal and the elephants had vanished into thin air. They had turned up the eastern bank of the Rhône, and were already beyond Scipio's reach.

These extraordinary manœuvres could mean only one thing – an invasion of Italy. Scipio seems to have had a clear perception of the circumstances. From Tarascon, where the road crossed the Rhône, there were two ways into Italy – one by the coast road, and the other up the river Rhône and round by the pass now known as the 'Little St. Bernard,' which was the regular road between Italy and central Gaul. There was no other road suitable for an army: none, that is, that a Roman is likely to have heard of. Now, the Little St. Bernard is 7064 feet above the sea, and the month was October. If we look at the map, and consider the circumstances, we shall probably think that Scipio had good grounds for his belief that he could reach Italy in time to meet Hannibal and the Carthaginians as they descended from the pass; if they ever did descend. The Little St. Bernard is not the best place for an army in October – especially for an army including African troops and African elephants. Scipio packed his baggage and set off for Italy, leaving his brother Gnæus to continue the march into Spain.

Hannibal, in later years, was destined to acquire an almost unequalled reputation for unpredictability. On this, the first occasion on which he came into contact with the Romans, he showed to the full his power of baffling reasonable expectation. He was not going by the Little St. Bernard. He had obtained information of another and a more convenient route, which was not a beaten or recognized road. His march up the Rhône brought him to the confluence of the Isère, where he met, by arrangement, the chiefs of the Allobroges. The plan – arranged beforehand – was that Hannibal's army should secure the rule of the Allobroges to the chief Brancus; and that in return Brancus should supply guides and equipment for a mountain march. Hence instead of struggling up to the Little St. Bernard,

the Carthaginians marched up the Isère¹ as far as Grenoble, struck south-east up one of the tributaries, crossed into the Durance valley, and arrived within a short distance of the pass now known as the Mont Genève. This was the pass at which Hannibal was aiming. It is nearly a thousand feet lower than the Little St. Bernard, and cuts off many miles from the journey between Italy and Spain.

Hannibal never reached the Mont Genève pass. Either his guides betrayed him or he could not credit their assertions; for after reaching the Durance Valley he missed the direct road, took one at right angles to it, and after one or two false casts found a pass which he supposed to be the right one. From a spot near by he triumphantly showed his men the prospect of Italy in the distance. The descent into Italy was the worst part of a terrible journey. The steepness of the way and the state of the snow-covered ground threatened disaster. Avalanches and rock-falls blocked the path. Hannibal held his men together, cut a new path, and brought them safely to the plains below. He had left Spain with 59,000 men. He arrived in Italy with 26,000. Such figures show, better than anything else, the nature of the feat he accomplished. Swiftmess and surprise were always to be the keynotes of Hannibal's character. He began his career with the greatest surprise he ever succeeded in planning. He had reached Italy with an army while Publius Scipio still imagined him to be struggling up the ascents to the Little St. Bernard, and before the senate had taken a single precaution against him, or a single step in defence.

¹ Hannibal's route is one of the famous controversial themes of history. For two modern views see Mr. Freshfield (*Hannibal once more*, 1914), who contends for a route by the Drac Valley to the Col de l'Argentière; and Mr. A. R. Bonus (*Where Hannibal Passed*, 1925), who argues for a route by the Romanche to Briançon and the Col de Malaure. Mr. Freshfield showed that Hannibal's pass must lie within certain geographical limits. To Mr. Bonus, on the other hand, belongs the credit of discovering a point from which Hannibal could have shown his troops the plains of Italy. In earlier days, when the Alps were imperfectly explored, no such place as that described by Polybius and Livy was known to exist. Mr. Bonus discovered a place fulfilling the conditions required and falling within the limits called for by Mr. Freshfield. He says: 'The Col is still there; so (given a day of reasonable visibility) is the view: Abries has an adequate hotel and is perfectly easy to reach by train and connecting P.L.M. coach up the valley of the Guil; and any one of decent physique can reach the Col from Abries. It is a bit of a trudge, but there is no technical difficulty whatever.' Both books are highly readable, and both are well illustrated.

III

Even so, Hannibal had no time to lose. Publius Scipio had landed again at Pisa and was hurrying north. Scipio had practically nothing to fight with. If Hannibal had only 26,000 exhausted men and half a dozen underfed elephants, Scipio had scarcely so much. He had only the unbeatable courage and untiring energy of the Roman. He began by taking over the new, undisciplined and disheartened troops with which the prætors Manlius and Atilius had been waging unsuccessful wars against the Gauls – poor stuff with which to face the seasoned veterans of Hannibal. He got to Placentia with this ragged army in time to hear that Hannibal had defeated the Taurini of the upper Padus valley and was advancing eastward. The Taurini had not been absolutely convinced of the desirability of the strange men who had arrived (very disreputable in appearance) over the Alps. Hannibal had taught them their error. Other Gallic tribes had hastened to smile more affectionately upon the newcomers. Unless Scipio risked something, there might be a general secession among the Gauls in favour of this stranger who carried so trenchant a sword in one hand, and so resolutely held out the other in friendship. The consul therefore crossed the Padus and advanced to the Ticinus, where he threw a bridge across the river and fortified it with a bridge-head. Hannibal had reached Victumulæ, one of the main stations on the road from the Alps, five miles or so west of the Ticinus, when the advance guard of Scipio made contact with him. A brisk cavalry skirmish ended unfortunately for the Romans. Scipio himself was wounded, and was only saved from falling into the hands of the enemy by his seventeen-year-old son, the future victor of Zama. The fight revealed one important fact – Hannibal's immense superiority in cavalry. During the following night the Romans quietly evacuated their lines and were in full retreat before their retirement was known. They reached old Placentia just in time.¹ The Carthaginian

¹ The difficulties of the narrative as it exists in the pages of Livy and Polybius are put right by supposing that old Placentia stood some miles to the west of the later city. This solution of the problem was long ago suspected, but Professor Tenny Frank has assembled real evidence in support of it in his article 'Placentia and the Battle of the Trebia,' *J.R.S.*, IX (1919), pp. 202–207.

pursuit seized the detachment which had been left on the northern bank of the Padus to cast loose the floating bridge; but the bridge itself had already drifted into mid-stream, and the Romans were safe.

Hannibal was obliged to make a detour. He had to march some distance up the stream in order to find a convenient spot for crossing. It was some days before he could pitch his camp before Placentia. Scipio, still suffering from his wound, retreated still further during the next night, crossed the Trebia (which flows into the Padus very nearly at right angles, a few miles eastward) and took up a fresh position, on the higher ground, where Hannibal's cavalry was useless. Here they watched one another.

In the meantime the senate had recognized the inwardness of the situation. Hannibal's invasion of Italy was the real centre of military activity. Sicily could wait. An urgent message was sent to Tiberius Sempronius Longus, instructing him to join Scipio with all his available forces. The war in Sicily was therefore allowed to drop, while Longus transferred a portion of his army round to Ariminum, and so, by the direct road, to Placentia.

Such was the cautious and skilful defensive work of Scipio, that no alteration had taken place in the military position when Longus joined him. As soon as the newcomer took over the command from his invalid colleague, Hannibal noticed the change. After testing him with a little light skirmishing, he found that Longus could be tempted: he proceeded to tempt him, and Longus, being tempted, fell.

IV

Roman power had been founded on the wonderful success with which her statesmen had applied a knowledge of human nature to the practical task of governing. Up to the present, however, they had hardly cultivated a knowledge of their own human nature. The problems, powers, contradictions and complications of their own minds were, for them, still an unexplored territory. Hannibal was the man who began the process of exploration and who educated the Roman in a higher level of knowledge on this most urgent of all themes.

When Hannibal's Numidian cavalry forayed up to the gates

of the Roman camp, Longus naturally ordered them to be driven off. The new consul meant to fight sooner or later – sooner rather than later – and in his firm conviction that everything happened by accident it might have been hard to persuade him that what followed was a careful and elaborate trick, in which Hannibal was the sharper and Sempronius Longus the flat. The Numidians withdrew exactly as far as they were pursued. The Roman cavalry therefore kept on pursuing; the light infantry were called up to support them and the heavy infantry to support both. The whole of the Roman army was at last drawn beyond the Trebia. It was before breakfast on a winter day; a keen wind was blowing, and a little snow was falling as the Romans, having dashed across the Trebia breast-high in freezing water, stood numb and shivering and hungry before the warm and well-fed ranks of Hannibal, who were now unmasked before them, with cavalry and elephants on each flank. Enveloped by the cavalry and elephants, the fate of the Romans was finally sealed when a detachment of Carthaginians, hitherto concealed under the banks of a stream, started up and attacked them in the rear. Only the Roman-born legions, carrying the consul Longus with them, survived. Forming square when the army broke up, they fought their way through the Carthaginian ranks and made good their way to Placentia. Ten thousand men achieved the refuge of the great fortress. Thirty thousand – chiefly allied or auxiliary troops – were slain, drowned in the ice-cold Trebia, or were homeless fugitives in the winter weather.

The battle of the Trebia was the Romans' first taste of Hannibal. It was not to be the last. It left them stunned with a bewildered sense that here was a man who not only won battles (they could understand that !) but who actually created the circumstances which gave him victory ! This was the difficult thing for them to grasp.

As soon as night descended over the bleak and wintry battlefield, Scipio once more secretly struck camp and made a night march. The weary Carthaginians were too exhausted with their day's work to be on the look out. He slipped by them in the dark and the tempestuous weather, and reached his colleague at Placentia. Thence they crossed the Padus and retreated to Cremona. Scipio took charge there while Longus

made the difficult and dangerous journey to Rome, to report, and to hold the elections.

Longus was the plebeian consul. His presence in Rome calmed public feeling, while the continued presence of Scipio in the field satisfied the aristocratic party. The report made by Longus resulted in the election as consul for next year of Gaius Flaminius, the real leader of the *populares*. Longus had lost the battle of the Trebia. It remained to be seen what his successor could do.

The consular elections had been held in December. The consuls would take up their office on the following 15th of March. During the interval there was a good deal of activity in the political circles at Rome. The *populares* anticipated a determined effort to unseat Flaminius – probably upon some excuse connected with the auspices. Flaminius was determined not to be unseated. He resolved to enter upon office in the field, not at Rome. By mutual arrangement Longus retreated from Cremona to Ariminum, where Flaminius, journeying secretly from Rome, met him. On the 15th of March, therefore, the patrician consul alone was inducted at the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the Capitol, with full religious ceremony. Flaminius was at Ariminum entering upon an office which he derived from the Roman electors rather than from the Roman gods. The senate understood the hint, and was none the better pleased on that account. It could, however, do nothing. Flaminius was the man in possession.

v

The retreat of Longus from Cremona had opened to Hannibal the road southward. Following deliberately in the track of Longus, Hannibal turned off the road before he reached Ariminum, and took a short, little-known and difficult pass across the Apennines into Etruria. As soon as the news was known, Flaminius left Ariminum on a parallel course and crossed the Apennines also. Hannibal arrived near Florence to find that Flaminius had blocked him by occupying Arretium. While the consul held such a position, Hannibal was unable to take any decisive step or force any decisive issue. Unless he could bring Flaminius to battle and destroy his army, his own would melt and dissolve with the lapse of time.

Already the great controversy was beginning to divide the Romans into zealous parties. The officers on the consul's staff – most of them *optimates* by sympathy and patrician by descent – were in favour of declining battle and of keeping Hannibal continually in suspense, continually on guard against a blow which threatened, and might at any moment fall. Flaminius, however, refused to hear of any such policy. He maintained the view which afterwards marked the *populares*, that at any cost the attempt should be made to deal a knock-out blow. He hated the idea of standing by in idleness from motives of policy, while the Carthaginian mercenaries slew and plundered. What kind of policy could look unmoved upon the suffering of the people?

Hannibal was perfectly informed concerning the state of opinion at the Roman headquarters. He considered the situation in the light of the views and beliefs entertained by Flaminius, and he prepared to make out of these views and beliefs a trap which should catch their holder.

A few days of systematic frightfulness by the invaders brought Flaminius into the right mood. His blood boiled to see the sufferings of the afflicted Etruscans, which he, the consul, was supposed to be preventing. He was disturbed by no thoughts of the possible wheels within wheels, of the intricacies, complexities, subtleties and convolutions by which he might be over-reached and exploited. He was a simple, straightforward man. He moved from Arretium with the fixed resolution to fight wheresoever and whensoever he should meet the Carthaginian army.

This was what Hannibal wanted. All that remained was to arrange the time and the place to suit himself. From Cortona he marched slowly along the road that skirted the northern shore of Lake Trasumennus, between the water of the lake and the mountains. The consul followed. Now, this was Italy, and the consul was an Italian. If any man realized the significance of that topography, or how it could be exploited to military advantage, it should have been an Italian. Nevertheless, looking, he saw nothing. It was the eye of the African Semite which looked, saw, and understood. Flaminius followed Hannibal into the lake-side road without adequate examination of the ground or consideration of its

nature. And from that road he never emerged alive: nor did more than a small proportion of his army.

In Rome it was known that the consul intended to fight, and that the battle was impending which should avenge the Trebia and free Italy from the storm-cloud that hung over it. All day long, day after day, the gates were thronged with anxious men and women who could not settle to work or play, but waited for news. Eyes were strained along the roads by which news would come. It came strangely, incredibly, vaguely – the awful whisper of disaster and the rumour of defeat. There came an evening when the truth had to be told. Before the agitated crowd which filled the Forum, the prætor M. Pomponius Matho stepped upon the rostra.

‘We have been defeated in a great battle,’ he said, briefly; and left the platform.

It was not merely defeat; it was catastrophe. Flaminius and his whole army had been wiped off the earth; and of that army practically nothing was left.

VI

The battle of Lake Trasumennus lifted Hannibal to the full height of his fame as a general. From this day onward Rome was on the defensive – and was fully conscious of the fact. She was facing – and she realized it – a kind of dæmoniac intelligence: a craft so profound and horrible that it might accomplish the seemingly impossible task of devouring her bit by bit. The Roman had shown himself proof against impatience, cowardice and levity. Could he show himself proof against deception? Could he walk through the valley of the shadow without falling a victim to the snares and traps of this Carthaginian trickster? The Roman had never really believed in brains. His faith was in the moral virtues of courage and loyalty. Could he prove himself right by developing those moral virtues to a point where they out-towered and out-shone the intellectual virtues of Hannibal? This was what he had to demonstrate.

The first step was to place Rome upon a war footing. The senate, recognizing that authority is divided in order to be checked, but concentrated in order to be strengthened, proceeded to strengthen it by concentrating it into one man’s

hands. Q. Fabius Maximus was the man chosen. One consul was dead, and the other was cut off from communication with Rome. It was therefore impossible to appoint a dictator according to the old constitutional usage. Another method had to be thought of. It was decided that the Assembly should elect Fabius as a magistrate with dictatorial authority – a ‘Pro-Dictator.’

T. Sempronius Longus and G. Flaminius had been leaders of the *populares*. By a natural reaction of feeling the Pro-Dictator was taken from the *optimates*. Fabius was a gentle, slow, rather ponderous fellow. To the modern age, brought up upon Norman ideas of nobility, he may seem strangely lacking in aristocratic temper. He was nevertheless a very typical Roman aristocrat – akin in quality and tone to those dour, canny and steadfast men who could never be rushed or frightened or flurried, but pursued their ways with inflexible steadiness – the Quintii and Furii of earlier Rome. He was invested with office by no junta or clique. He received his power from the electors, and in all his actions he showed that he appreciated this fact.

Hannibal had followed the road eastward after the battle of Trasumennus. For a time his passage cut a swathe of destruction and devastation across central Italy, isolating the surviving consul at Ariminum. At last he settled at Hatria, where he rested awhile and reorganized, and got into touch again with Carthage. The time evidently had not yet come when he could march straight upon Rome, sure that no defence would be offered; Rome was not yet stripped of her allies or isolated from them. Fabius raised a new army without difficulty and the allies showed no sign whatsoever of refusing their contingents. Hannibal therefore marched on into Apulia and was there when Fabius appeared with the new Roman army, and took position at Æcæ.

A very short trial of wits showed that the policy of the Pro-Dictator had opened a new chapter in the war. Fabius put into operation a definite policy of refusing to give Hannibal any opportunity of using his brains. He knew the Roman strength – and he knew where Hannibal’s advantage lay. He watched, he marched, he shifted camp; he followed Hannibal like an inconvenient and troublesome dog; but close he would

not, and tempted, beguiled or outwitted he could not be. Simple – even stupid – as he seemed to some observers, there was a cunning as deep as Hannibal's own in the policy of Fabius. It was calculated with accuracy to achieve a definite end. If the cost were heavy it could not be helped. Victory, at any cost, was the aim of Fabius.

It was, of course, a truism that the Romans had the whole resources of Italy at their call, while Hannibal had only what he could take. The policy of Fabius, continually preventing Hannibal from re-provisioning himself or recruiting or re-equipping his host, struck with deadly effect at the weak point of the Carthaginian. . . . But just as Hannibal's intellectual cunning went beyond the Roman, so did the moral cunning of Fabius. Before long there were murmurs; there was sharp criticism; there was finally emphatic opposition.

The mantle of Longus and Flaminius had descended upon P. Minucius Rufus, who occupied the position of 'Master of the Horse' to the Pro-Dictator. Minucius was one of the few men with authority to speak – and he spoke with no uncertain voice. He considered the new policy a timid one, which could not grapple with the real trouble. Fabius, however, was not to be diverted from his policy by criticism. With his gentle obtuseness he resisted every suggestion of altering his methods. As long as he held authority there should be no more battles of Lake Trasumennus. Minucius went on criticizing, but obeyed.

Fabius presented a problem which could not be despised. The only ways in which he could be effectually dealt with were to get him moving, and to catch him out on the move; or to terrorise the Roman elector into revoking his command. Hannibal began a systematic course of rapid movement which forced Fabius to follow; and at the same time a process of devastation which should make the Roman elector feel that he was paying too high a price for the virtues of Fabius. Either of these methods might succeed; with luck, both might do so. So began the historic duel between Hannibal and Fabius, which to later ages seemed as proverbial and symbolic as the wars of the gods.

VII

The first movement of Hannibal was across Samnium to Campania. The Roman legions came tramping quietly on his flank, witnesses of the flame and devastation with which he marked his track. It was not a sight they enjoyed; and he took care to make it as provocative and as disheartening as possible. He crossed the Volturnus and entered the rich and prosperous land of Campania. Here he burnt and ravaged far and wide. The Numidian cavalry particularly distinguished itself in the work of destruction. Fabius took up a position on Mount Massicus, just over the border in Latium, where his presence set a limit to the northerly activities of the Carthaginians; and thence he and his men beheld the smoke and flame of that wealthy land rise up to heaven. . . . If Hannibal imagined that the devastation of Campania was at all likely to add to his popularity in Italy he was singularly mistaken in his ideas of human nature. But perhaps it was not exactly popularity that he was troubling about at the moment. He wanted to force Fabius to fight.

Little as his actions conduced to his ultimate acceptance by the people of Italy, it was excellently adapted to the more immediate purpose. The silent public opinion of the Roman army, rising to boiling point, found a vigorous expression in the sarcasms and arguments of Minucius. Fabius opposed to this public opinion a passive resistance that nothing seemed able to move. So strong was Roman discipline and sense of law, that he might have permanently resisted the wishes of his fellow-countrymen but for a curious and remarkable incident which became one of the famous episodes of history.

Hannibal had come to Campania because it was one of those sensitive spots where damage was especially irritating to the Romans, and particularly tempting to reprisals. He had, of course, no intention of remaining there permanently, shut in between hills overlooking his encampment. His plan was to take up quarters for the winter inland, in a spot more convenient and more generally accessible. But he had come a little incautiously into Campania. His best way out (except by a detour which he had no wish to make) was by a narrow pass on Mount Callicula, down which he had originally come.

As soon as the preliminary movements of the Carthaginians betrayed their purpose, Fabius seized this pass. To blockade Hannibal was quite within the limits he had set himself, and as far as any one could see, the seizure of the pass effectively achieved the end in view. But no Roman had yet really grasped the extent of Hannibal's resourcefulness. In the dead of night his scouts drove a herd of oxen along the ridge above the pass, with burning faggots of brushwood tied to their horns. So good was the illusion of an army on the march with torches, that the Romans in the valley at once mounted the hillside to bar its way. Hannibal, acutely on the watch, slipped through the gap, and by daylight had effected a neat and workmanlike retreat with trifling loss – one of the most perfect instances of military dexterity in history.

Fabius followed; but the episode had turned the scale against him. He was now covered with ridicule in the eyes of his countrymen, who keenly appreciated the humiliating side of this bloodless defeat. Hannibal fixed upon Gerunium for his winter quarters; and after establishing an entrenched camp at Larinum, to watch him, Fabius left his army there and returned to Rome. The next stages of the war would be fought in the senate-house and the Assembly.

VIII

The wrestle which took place in the political arena at Rome had Hannibal for an amused and appreciative observer. He perfectly understood what was at stake, and was content to wait until his enemies made up their minds. Quintus Fabius faced his fellow countrymen a solitary and isolated figure. He was as quietly immovable in the face of their criticisms as he had been untemptable in the face of the manoeuvres of Hannibal. Tribunes were conducting a heated campaign of disparaging oratory against him. Fabius himself, pointing out to his fellow senators the military talent against which they had to fight, was uncomfortably conscious that his remarks were not well received. Worse than this, in his absence, Minucius had been tempted into an engagement with Hannibal in which he had narrowly, by pure good luck, escaped defeat – and Rome was only too willing to praise a marvellous victory. Fabius, rising in the senate to condemn the popular hero, and to suggest

his recall, showed, in doing so, a good deal more moral courage than the Spartan Leonidas was ever called upon to show.

Fabius, like Leonidas, lost his fight, and he recognized it. He set the limit to his term of office as Pro-Dictator by nominating a consul, M. Atilius Regulus, to replace Flaminius, who (as we have seen), had died in harness. Having set the normal political machinery in motion, he left Rome before the decisive vote was taken in the Assembly. He was still upon the road when the official courier overtook him with despatches from the senate. The Assembly had decreed that Minucius should have an authority equal to that of Fabius – and the senate notified him of the change. Fabius accepted this too with calm. On arriving at his field headquarters he informed Minucius, and gave him the choice of dividing the army between them, or of taking the command on alternate days. Minucius chose the former alternative; so it was agreed, and the troops were apportioned between the two generals for the remaining time during which the Pro-Dictatorship continued.

The decision of the Assembly was largely due to the action of a man whom we must carefully mark; for his personality was, to a large extent, responsible for the history of the critical period of the war. Gaius Terentius Varro was reputed to be the son of a butcher, and to have helped his father with the shop in his youthful days. He emerged now as the political successor of Flaminius and the heir to his policy. Like Flaminius, he was firmly opposed to the Fabian methods. He believed that Rome had sufficient resources, if they were properly used, to destroy Hannibal and put a stop to his activity. He believed neither in the good faith nor the good sense of Fabius.

Varro was not a sporadic individual. He led a party, the *Populares*, which embodied a long political tradition and had a great political history. Even if Varro himself observed discretion in his rhetoric, his supporters were not so careful. They contended that the war had been brought about by the aristocratic party for its own purposes, and that now the same party was trying to conduct it at the expense of the common people. Hannibal was not the danger he was represented to be. He could be effectively disposed of; and it was the duty of the military leaders to dispose of him. Varro stood for the

consulship not only with the knowledge that he might be made responsible for carrying out the military policy he advocated, but with the wish to be responsible. He believed that he could make good his words.

IX

When Hannibal heard of the fiercely fought electoral contest at Rome and the election of Varro as plebeian consul, he must have known that his efforts to force a battle had been successful. The battle would now assuredly be fought.

Varro's success was not only an indication of the state of popular feeling in Rome, but marked a certain trend even among the aristocratic electors who normally would have supported Fabius. The patrician consul who secured election as Varro's colleague was L. Æmilius Paulus. His qualifications were peculiar. He had suffered at the hands of suspicious popular leaders who questioned his conduct during his former term of office, and he was intensely prejudiced against them. He could be trusted to make himself personally disagreeable to Varro: but he could also be trusted to take substantially the same line. As a man with military experience, he did not always commit himself to statements and promises as sweeping as those made by Varro; but he was ready to support him in a reasonably aggressive policy. This uncertainty of conflict and sympathy was the note of the combination. When, in the spring of the year 216, the two consuls set out for Rome to take command in Apulia, Hannibal had every reason to feel that he was obtaining the results he wanted.

Between the troops that Fabius had led and the new drafts brought from Rome by the consuls, the Roman army watching Gerunium was over eighty thousand strong, chiefly of that Roman and allied infantry which had won so great a repute in the field. All the organization, preparation and tactics were normal. Hannibal could rely upon an enemy army which would go by clockwork. With himself, this was far from being the case. Stores were very nearly exhausted; the Spanish troops would not be able to remain with him much longer unless he could produce new supplies or the hope thereof; there had already been talk of transferring the Carthaginian camp to

another site; only his own hope and confidence remained unimpaired. As his last resources petered out, he was able to point out to his men the unmistakable signs that their work and patience had not been in vain. A large Roman army was taking up a comfortable position where it could be hit. A few days more and Hannibal would yet snatch a triumph from the very jaws of apparent failure.

He did not get it all at once.¹ A carefully planned attempt to interest them in an empty Carthaginian camp, while Hannibal and his men watched from the neighbouring hills – this broke down over the determination of Paulus to examine beforehand all the ground he occupied. Failing to get them to walk into this trap, and driven by the need of finding supplies, Hannibal tried the plan of keeping in motion and seeking to catch his opponents out in the course of their countermoves. He retreated southward. The consuls followed. At Cannæ – a spot favourable for all his various purposes – he halted and camped. Here he was within reach of the ripening Apulian harvest. The consuls took ground at Aufidena six miles to the eastward. Paulus was in favour of finding a less disadvantageous battle ground, but his opinions were not popular. A very little testing of the Roman temper by means of the Numidian light horse was enough. Varro took the responsibility of marshalling the Roman army for battle. Hannibal accepted the invitation and the armies stood face to face.

X

An elaborate system of manœuvres, lasting nearly a year, and extending over a large part of Italy, had now been brought to the issue desired – a pitched battle with a definite result. Of that result, Hannibal had practically no doubt at all. He was absolutely confident of his ability to destroy the Roman army; especially in view of the tactical advantages it was recklessly granting him. The consequences, while not quite so certain, were reasonably probable. If Rome's allies still clung to her the day after the coming battle, then Hannibal was

¹ Here the version of Livy is followed. According to Polybius, Hannibal had left Gerunium and seized Cannæ before the consuls arrived. Polybius agrees, however, that the Romans intended to fight.

making a remarkable mistake, and the Roman dominion was not what he thought it.

Varro had conceded the choice of ground. He now conceded Hannibal the advantage of making his dispositions to suit those of the Romans. Hannibal exploited both advantages to the full. Against the Roman centre he designed a curious formation, the meaning of which was not clear at the time; a crescent of Spanish and Gallic infantry supported by columns of African infantry. His heavy cavalry he massed on the left, opposite Æmilius Paulus; his light Numidian cavalry he spread out on the open plain to the right. Then, as if these advantages were not enough, the Romans gave him one more – of deciding where, when and how the scheme of operations should begin.

As far as Varro had any intelligent notion of what he was doing, it seems to have consisted in the idea that the weight of the Roman infantry centre could be counted on to destroy anything opposed to it – the 'steam roller' idea which still, centuries after his day, deluded those who believed in the magic of mere numbers. Hannibal's plan was to encourage this idea of Varro's in order to induce the Roman infantry to wedge itself between the columns of his African infantry. Held by these pincers, the Roman centre was then to be struck by the sledgehammer of the heavy Gallic cavalry.

The plan worked. As soon as the battle opened, the heavy Gallic cavalry proceeded to sweep off the field the Roman cavalry opposed to it. As soon as the ground was clear it passed across to the Roman left and united with the Numidians to drive off this wing also. It then wheeled upon the rear of the Roman infantry. This attack in the rear was the decisive event. The Roman infantry, moving forward, under the impression that it was driving the Spaniards before its onslaught, had been disordered by a confused advance which unduly crowded the front ranks and caused them to get out of control. They were in any case not veteran troops; their training was imperfect and they were none too clear as to what they were doing. It was at this point that they were attacked in the rear, and thrown into a confusion from which they never recovered. Their very numbers then made their position hopeless. Hemmed in, out of control, and without orders, they

were massacred wholesale by a much smaller army of better trained and better led men. A certain number broke through in a compact body and fought their way off the field; but the majority fell fighting in a disastrous confusion into which they had been betrayed by ignorance, over-confidence, insufficient training and inadequate leadership.

XI

The destruction of the Roman army at Cannæ was much more than a serious military defeat – it was a moral crisis of the first order. Its first effect was the complete eclipse of Varro, and of the policy which had fought and lost the three great battles of the Trebia, Trasumennus and Cannæ. Only too obviously the whole set of principles upon which Longus, Flaminius and Varro had acted was either false or at least misleading. The answer to Hannibal must be not quantitative but qualitative in nature. Inexhaustible resources and overwhelming numbers were no defence against brains. Something of the same intellectual nature was required – something spiritual; if not another dæmoniac intelligence then at least some kind of moral inspiration. Rome turned, as one man, towards Fabius.

If the genius of Hannibal had never been better illustrated than at Cannæ, that of Fabius similarly was never better shown than in his actions when the news of disaster arrived. He struck a note of calm good sense and good nature which Rome was swift to pick up from him. He was the man whom events had justified. He showed no feeling of triumph and no sense of rancour; he merely set to work to construct a new state of mind for Rome – a determination to triumph over all obstacles, beginning with those in his own heart. He began the defeat of Hannibal by dismissing from among his own motives all presumption, all insolence, all the faults of incaution and unreason. Hannibal had traded on those characteristics. The whole of Rome, according to its various lights and powers at this crisis, watched Fabius – and seeing what he did, it went and did likewise.

XII

For some days after the news arrived the city of Rome was prostrate beneath such a moral blow as is inflicted on mankind only by hurricane, earthquake, pestilence, or war – those four great horrors of human life. Those who had been most eager against Fabius needed time to adjust their thoughts. In the meantime the senate, obeying meekly the prosaic leadership and sober advice of Fabius, set about the necessary steps to defend the city and preserve public order. News is not always so bad as its first impact seems to imply. Consoling and encouraging details came in. Varro wrote from Canusium near Cannæ to say that though L. Æmilius was dead he himself was there with ten thousand men, survivors from the battle; and that Hannibal was willing to negotiate for the return of a large number of prisoners he had taken. . . . The consul did not say exactly how he got to Canusium. He omitted – and it was a human and pardonable omission – to tell his colleagues of the senate that he had found himself at Venusia, thirty miles from the battle, with the distracted rout of the beaten army, and that it was a group of young officers of aristocratic birth and strongly opposed political principles, who had organized a refuge camp at Canusium, created order out of chaos, discovered the whereabouts of the surviving consul and by a little tactful shop-window-dressing enabled him to cut a much more respectable figure in the eyes of his fellow-citizens. They were hardly called upon to save the face of the man who, more than any other human being, was responsible for the disaster; but some true instinct taught them that it would be wise to forget these things. The main task now was to show the world the spectacle of all Romans hand-in-hand in their day of adversity. The more trying the adversity, the more they must unite to face it.

XIII

They accurately anticipated the policy of their fathers and leaders in Rome. The senate, after publishing the casualty lists, sent word to Varro to return to Rome. It was resolved to clean the slate and to begin the war afresh. Varro came. His return was a higher act of moral heroism than the death

of Æmilius Paulus. Æmilius had said beforehand that if they lost the coming battle he would never face his countrymen again. Varro showed a nobler if a more pathetic courage. A man who has in good faith committed some error which involves catastrophe to his country and death to thousands of his countrymen may appreciate better – perhaps more bitterly – than we can the feelings with which Varro prepared to face the justifiable criticism of Rome. He realized his irretrievable mistakes. He could not make them good; he could not offer any sacrifice or compensation. He could only come in person to stand before his fellow-citizens and confess that he had been wrong. His fellow-citizens realized that they also had been wrong. No scene in Roman history is more famous than that in which they met him with an official welcome, and thanked him for doing his duty and not despairing of the state.

There were to be no recriminations and no feuds under the new dispensation.¹ They made no attempt to find a scapegoat. They solemnly took the responsibility upon their own collective shoulders. Varro lived a good many years afterwards, a sadder and a wiser man. He had no further remarks to make about the aristocrats; and the aristocrats made no further remarks about him.

¹ Compare the very different reception given to Cæpio after the battle of Arausio; *Sulla the Fortunate*, pp. 115–117.

CHAPTER VII

HANNIBAL, THE WAR IN ITALY AND THE INFLUENCE OF QUINTUS FABIVS

(216 B.C. - 206 B.C.)

I

Little by little the truth emerged. The battle of Cannæ had hardly scratched the material power of Roman dominion in Italy. Its whole import was moral; and as the days slipped on it became ever clearer that instead of frightening or disheartening the Romans, it had united them and hardened their hearts. As the blare of the bellicose Varro died down, it was replaced by the far more ominous note of the calm and gentle Fabius. Hannibal, in taking a rational view of the probabilities had altogether miscalculated. Two and two did not equal four when they stood for Roman defeats. The Ticinus, the Trebia, Trasumennus and Cannæ were not four defeats in the arithmetic of the Roman - they were nil.

Hannibal had been prepared to open negotiations after Cannæ. This had been the reason of his refusal to march upon Rome and of his readiness to negotiate concerning the prisoners. With the delegation of prisoners which went to Rome to ask the senate to arrange for their ransom went a Carthaginian representative named Carthalo, entrusted with the task of making tactful enquiries, and, if it seemed advantageous, of opening discussions. . . . Hannibal had made a mistake. As soon as Carthalo entered Latium he was stopped by a Roman lictor and directed to leave Roman territory. As for the prisoners, the senate refused to waste any money whatsoever upon them. Since they had surrendered they could stay where they were. Rome had no use for men who put up their hands. Nine of the ten delegates returned dismally to Hannibal. The tenth, who thought that perhaps he need not go back, was arrested by order of the senate and sent back in irons. . . . It

may have been unkind; but as a gesture there was no mistaking it. The Roman only forgave his enemies when they were unsuccessful.

If the Romans showed this spirit, the Roman allies were hardly less steadfast. No great secession took place from the Roman dominion after Cannæ. The members of the alliance were satisfied with the material and moral advantages which they derived from it and did not consider that they would better their condition by transferring their connection to Carthage. Hannibal struck camp from Cannæ. His great victory had been a very qualified success. It was necessary to try elsewhere.

During the autumn following Cannæ he crossed Samnium into Campania and made a very mixed bag of "allies" – most of them of an involuntary nature and of disappointing quality. He got possession of Capua but failed to take Neapolis. A sweep through Bruttium and Lucania by Mago secured the perhaps rather nominal adhesion of a half-wild population of mountaineers and of a number of Greek commercial cities which were afraid to deny it. Samnium – always hostile to Rome – threw in its lot with the invader; and there were, of course, the Cisalpine Gauls, who could be depended upon to side against the losers in any war. The upshot was, that Hannibal could claim at any rate the nominal support of the half-barbarous tribes of the less civilized portions of Italy and of such cities as he could overawe by his actual presence or propinquity. From the strong and well-organized communities of central and civilized Italy, where the heart of the Roman power lay, Hannibal had no support at all. The old original Roman power stood absolutely intact.

II

It is the custom to blame Carthage for not more adequately supporting Hannibal now that success was in sight. The old oligarchic party at Carthage would have much to say on this score. They did not admit that they were called upon to support him. Spain had supported Carthage, not Carthage Spain. They did not admit that success was in sight. They did not admit that Carthage ought to compromise herself by too much support of the Spanish Dictator. The sentiments

which Cato the younger in after years entertained concerning the conqueror of Gaul such men as Hanno now entertained concerning the conqueror of Italy. In this they were unwise. They did not yet realize that, right or wrong, they had to stand or fall with Hannibal.

But although the Italian alliance stood firm with Rome, and although a large and powerful party at Carthage was hostile to Hannibal, his own friends were sufficiently numerous in Carthage to secure for him as much help as he could employ. Money was poured out, troops were raised, so that Hasdrubal could be set free to join his brother. Hasdrubal was obliged to answer that he could not leave Spain without incurring the risk of a native rising which would imperil the whole Carthaginian dominion. Troops and elephants were accordingly despatched to Hannibal direct. It was not, however, troops that he especially needed. What he required was something that would split the Roman alliance. Up to the present nothing seemed capable of doing it. More important even than help from Carthage were the overtures from Macedon and from Syracuse, which promised the possibility, at no distant date, of confronting the Italian *bloc* with a league of Mediterranean powers of even greater total wealth and resources.

The first hint of this impending threat came to the Romans during the summer after the battle of Cannæ. The Roman sea-scouts cruising in the Ionian Sea caught a strange vessel which had unsuccessfully attempted flight. The passengers had a remarkably plausible tale to tell. They were ambassadors, they said, from King Philip to the senate and people of Rome. They had not been able to get beyond Campania owing to the military operations so they were now going home. Their ingenious story might have been successful had not the commander thought that some of them had an appearance more Semitic than Greek. A little questioning proved that not only their appearance but their accent also was Semitic. Search revealed documents—among them nothing less than a complete treaty of alliance between King Philip and Hannibal. The truth was now clear. The prisoners were promptly sent to Rome under guard.

The Roman government therefore had the advantage of studying the treaty long before King Philip knew what it

contained; and the text which Polybius copied into his history is probably derived from the original which was captured on this occasion. Even the preamble had its interest for the Roman eyes which read it. It recited the names of the deities before whom it was solemnly contracted.

‘In the presence of Zeus, Hera and Apollo (*this for the Macedonians*) the Guardian Spirit of Carthage (*and not merely of the Spanish Dictator*), Heracles (*the old Tutelary Genius of the Phœnicians*) and Iolaus (*the Genius of Sardinia – so they were intending to resume possession there*), Ares, Triton and Poseidon (*no doubt Baal, Dagon and Melkarth or some such Phœnician gods*) . . . in the presence of all the gods who overrule Carthage, in the presence of all the gods who overrule Macedonia and the rest of Greece. . . .’

This was quite enough to justify the senators in a certain gloom of aspect. It meant a general mobilisation of the Greek and the Phœnician world – or at any rate, the threat of it. . . . It was quite true that the bite of the specific provisions was not so serious as the bark of the preamble – (King Philip and Hannibal were careful to stipulate that the terms only held good in the absence of previous engagements to the contrary) – but this was a case in which the bark, the expressed intention, was the thing of chief importance. The terms could always be stiffened up according to circumstance.

When at last Philip received word that the treaty had gone astray he had to send a fresh mission to Italy, and to do the whole of the work over again. In the meantime the Romans had detached M. Valerius Lævinus and an adequate force to watch Macedonia; and what with the delay and the precaution, the treaty resulted in no very great effects. Philip had scarcely entertained any very serious intention of giving immediate practical help to the Carthaginians. He had rather contemplated the possibility of deriving advantage himself from an association with the invincible Hannibal. As it was, the whole matter seemed to have fallen somewhat flat.

III

The threat of Syracusan defection was far more immediately serious. It was a part of a general change in the conditions of Sicily. Old King Hiero, who had become an ally of Rome before the First Punic War, had grown extremely old. He lasted just long enough to see the battle of Cannæ – and died, full of years and honours, in the autumn after the battle. His death was perhaps inevitable, for he was over ninety, and had reigned fifty-four years; but all the same, it was an extraordinary misfortune for the Romans. Hiero had been a man of business – a statesman who perfectly realised how states were built up and how national prosperity is created. Syracuse had never been happier or richer than under his rule. Like Augustus, he had known how to keep up a tactful fiction of republican equality to mask the reality of monarchical power. He was succeeded by his young grandson, a man who was very much in the hands of his aunts and uncles, the daughters and sons-in-law of Hiero.

The daughters of Hiero seem to have been victims of that strange and apparently incurable delusion which attacks some people – especially women – in such circumstances; the conviction that the fame and power which their father had won were wholly decorative, and had been built up by him and could be kept by them by the mere process of haughtily issuing orders to the lower classes. Young Hieronymus reigned thirteen months. Under the influence of his aunts he issued orders with great haughtiness; he refused to renew the old treaty with Rome but made a new treaty with Carthage, and sent to Hannibal to conclude an arrangement for co-operation. Hannibal was willing and sent two representatives, Hippocrates and Epicydes, to act as advisers to the young man. As soon as they were safely installed with him and had the strings of power firmly in their hands, Hieronymus was murdered. Neither then nor now could responsibility ever be brought home to Hannibal or his agents; but if we ask ourselves what happened we can only answer that step by step the whole family of Hiero was involved in political crimes of various kinds and was wiped out to the last member; and that Hippocrates and Epicydes remained, at the end of this remarkable process,

still the masters and dictators of Syracuse. If this were merely a coincidence, the coincidence was more than usually unfortunate. If, however, there is any truth in the old maxims which bid us look for the person who benefits – then our judgment must be that the representatives of Hannibal were the men who wrested Syracuse out of the hands of Hiero's descendants and launched her upon a career in opposition to Rome. To the Romans the course of events was only too obvious. They at once intervened.

They were too late. Syracuse, one of the strongest fortresses then existing anywhere in the world, had passed into the possession of Carthage, and a Carthaginian fleet was already landing an army in Sicily. Rome was confronted by a solid *bloc* of enemy states and enemy armies extending from the Pyrenees to Africa, from Africa to Syracuse, from Syracuse to the coasts of Greece, and thence to the mountains of Macedonia and including Corsica and Sardinia. The heart and centre of it all was Hannibal's headquarters in Italy – an elusive spot which shifted incalculably and was never long the same. Capua represented the point which was fought for in Italy. Round Capua swirled the tides of war; while in Sicily another war slowly developed; and in Spain the Scipio brothers were fighting yet a third.

IV

Cannæ had at last impressed upon the Romans one fact which they had learnt with hesitation and laid to heart with reluctance – they could not fight Hannibal in the field. Under the inspiration of Fabius, the senate had taken up the task of fighting a war in which a decisive battle should be beyond all other things carefully avoided. Hannibal was watched, blockaded, harassed, anticipated; no great military objective, such as the army which was destroyed at Cannæ, was ever again presented to him. A series of smaller armies – Fabius himself at Liternum: Gracchus at Cumæ: Claudius Marcellus at Suessula – worked in unison against him and entangled his movements. Lævinus in Apulia, Varro in Picenum and Sempronius Longus in Lucania held watching briefs at a distance. Month by month, year by year, Rome brought out and marshalled her resources: but she no longer threw them away as in those first years of

the war, rather placing them out in a slowly developing blockade of southern Italy. The area which Hannibal dominated in the first flush of his prestige after Cannæ, continued to be a more or less clear space in which he still moved freely; but it was gradually hemmed in by an increasing hedge of Roman armies which could so unite as always to present to Hannibal a superior force. Had he broken through this hedge it would have followed him and resumed its mobile blockade. It was conveniently based upon the great fortresses and fortified towns; but it was not tied to them. It was a blockade by small field armies. Hannibal drifted into the position of a chess player who plays simultaneously against many opponents. . . . This was the Fabian policy; and in the years immediately after Cannæ it effectively met the situation which faced Rome.

V

The development of this new post-Cannæan war astonished the public opinion of the contemporary world much as the trench-warfare of 1914-1918 astonished a later age. Its magnitude was unprecedented; it covered an unheard-of area with systematic and organised war - not the chaos which had often enough in the past spread like a devastating flood, but a coherent and directed war, of which every section was as much under central control as war ever can be.

The decisive point of this post-Cannæan war was gradually revealed to be Syracuse in Sicily. Slowly but surely the Roman government diverted to Syracuse the men, the money and the directive control necessary for victory. As soon as the murder of Hieronymus betrayed the seriousness of the situation, one of the strong men of the Roman governing circle was sent to take charge in Sicily - M. Claudius Marcellus, a narrow but vigorous plebeian. Marcellus arrived. He is not likely to have been ignorant of one of the commonplaces of history in that age - the tremendous repute of Syracuse as an impregnable fortress which had triumphantly resisted the strongest invader. That he knew it is hinted at by the rapidity and decision of his actions. He mobilized against Syracuse every man and ship and method available to him. No Roman before him had organized a siege on so vast a scale. He hurled against

Syracuse so immense a volume of aggressive energy that no one need have been surprised if he had carried the defences in the first assault. The seriousness of the situation is roughly indicated by the greatness of the effort Marcellus felt to be necessary: and it is more completely demonstrated by the greatness of the resistance which was opposed to that effort. The organization of Marcellus proved to be useless, the energy ineffective. His assaults were beaten off, and the siege had to be converted into a blockade.

Rome had needed to adapt her methods to cope with the mobile intelligence of Hannibal. At Syracuse she needed to adapt herself again to cope with a new and equally startling power of brains – the mechanical intelligence of Archimedes, the great Greek mathematician. Archimedes belonged to a previous generation and had been Hiero's Master of the Ordnance. He had equipped Syracuse with possibly the most formidable mechanical defences that were ever achieved prior to the invention of gunpowder.¹ Not until the day of cannon and explosive mines was any position defended with more deadly ingenuity than that which Archimedes had applied to the defences of Syracuse. Flesh and blood could not be sent indefinitely against these overwhelming material odds. Marcellus cordoned and invested the impregnable fortress, and besieged it with a more effective weapon than Archimedes had yet invented – the *power to wait* which was given him by the resources of the Roman dominion.

This power to wait was the means which ultimately won the war for Rome. It meant – a significant fact – that the utmost human genius could not make the single city of Syracuse the equal of the many cities of the Roman alliance, organized as they were and given a common policy by their leader. The death-knell of the city-state was struck when this fact became a determining one, settling the fate of a civilization – for this was the upshot of the siege of Syracuse.

¹ Details in Polybius VIII, 3-7, Livy XXIV, 33-34, Plut. *Marcellus*, the present author's *Hannibal*, Ch. VIII. The engines of Archimedes were ever after legendary among the Romans. He was believed to have set fire to the Roman fleet with a Heat Ray created by concentrating the sun's rays through a lens. He himself was as famous (perhaps as fabulous) as his deeds; but he was undoubtedly a very great man and a remarkable character.

VI

For something like two years and a quarter the war dragged its slow length along, while Marcellus was holding on to Syracuse and watching with inexhaustible patience for the moment of lassitude and neglect which would lay it open to him. Armies marched and countermarched round the vortex of Capua; King Philip, in Epirus, fought with the Romans; the Scipios, in Spain, carried their arms as far as Gibraltar; but Syracuse was the point at which was concentrated the real effort and expenditure. A Carthaginian army watched from Agrigentum, and Romans and Carthaginians scuffled, in their hours of leisure, for the villages and provincial towns of Sicily; but they were all waiting on the grand decision. Three summers had passed, and two winters. Marcellus could not make the blockade stringent enough to starve out the defenders; and they could not discourage him or tire his patience. Attempts to enter the city by intrigue broke down. Hannibal had every reason to believe that Syracuse would prove as impregnable to the Romans as she had proved to the Athenians; that if the defence could be prolonged the siege would collapse, and that this would be the beginning of the end for Rome.

This was the situation when, some twenty-eight months after the beginning of the siege, word was suddenly passed to the Syracusan headquarters that the Romans at last were in. Epicydes rushed to the danger zone – to find that it was but too true. On a dark night after a public holiday, at a weak point which they had unexpectedly discovered, they had mounted the wall by the simple, old-fashioned method of escalade, and had seized that section of the defences called the Hexapylon – a succession of gates like a six-fold barbican guarding the main high road where it entered Syracuse from the north. Holding this, they proceeded to extend their conquest. They seized Epipolæ, the upper portion of the city, cut off the great fortress called Euryalus, which dominated it, and forced its surrender. The fall of Euryalus meant that the Romans had achieved a secure foothold in Syracuse. It opened the way for the conquest of the rest of the city.

Before this could be accomplished Marcellus was himself besieged in Epipolæ by the Carthaginian army from Agrigentum,

which, supported by detachments of Greek volunteers, advanced to the relief of the city. A greater power than the sword, however, was fighting for the Romans. Plague broke out in the Carthaginian camp; the Greek allies retreated, and the Carthaginian relieving army perished. The Greek allies called for fresh recruits, and began to raise another army of relief; while the Carthaginian admiral, Bomilcar, brought a vast armada which waited off Cape Pachynus. Marcellus, not to be frightened off the prize, clung tenaciously to his ground and prepared to contest it. Bomilcar, however, hesitated to land fresh troops in the plague-stricken area, and seemed doubtful as to his chances of victory over the Roman fleet. He ultimately sailed away again and the Greek allies, left to their own resources, opened negotiations with Marcellus. Ultimately terms were arranged by which the old dominions of Hiero should become a Roman possession, while the Sicilian Greeks at large should retain the political forms to which they were accustomed: and the Greeks laid down their arms. All that remained was to seize the lower town, which was held by mercenary troops, the hired garrison of Epicydes. This was not managed without fighting; but ultimately the mercenaries also were brought to terms and the long agony drew to an end. Marcellus had fought his way into the heart of the vast fortress, and had wrested it from Carthaginian possession. The city which he evacuated a few months later was no longer the ancient Syracuse which had survived so many vicissitudes. Its walls breached, its prestige destroyed, its wealth plundered, it sank gradually into the position of a provincial town, the greatness of which was chiefly in its memories. Archimedes had been slain during the sack of the city. A century and a half afterwards even his tomb had been forgotten and was re-discovered overgrown and neglected by the new generation to whom he had become little more than a name.

VII

It was just about the time when Syracuse fell that the Romans completed the circumvallation of Capua. A double line had been built right round the city, shutting the besieged in and presenting an impregnable front to any army of relief. Hannibal had marched and counter-marched; he had worked

out problem after problem on the military chess-board and had brought all his problems to triumphant solution; but the lines went on creeping round Capua, and the time came when Capua was wholly shut in and her cry for help came faint and far off to the Carthaginian. He could not attack the lines with any hope of success. His army was an army of manœuvre, unfitted for the task of capturing a fixed fortified position. He had failed to inveigle the Roman commanders or disrupt their plans. The Fabian methods were now closing upon Capua a grip which could not be unloosed. The fall of the city, when it came, would undo the effect of the battle of Cannæ, destroy the prestige of Hannibal and bring back southern Italy to the Roman dominion just as the fall of Syracuse had brought back Sicily. The Roman had found, if not the answer, at any rate the counter to the dæmoniac intelligence—prudence and the spade. He was digging his way back to safety.

The dæmoniac intelligence was not yet quite finished with. Hannibal had one more horrifying shock to give the Romans—and it was the most horrifying shock of all. Ten days' rations were served out; then he set his army going again, and this time he wheeled north. If he could not get the Romans off Capua in any other way then he would go for Rome itself. Such was the implicit threat contained in his actions. He crossed the Vulturnus, took the route by Cales to Casinum, and set out along the Via Latina for Rome.

His aim was not to surprise Rome¹; for he was not prepared at the moment to deal with so stupendous a prize if by any startling accident it fell into his hands. What he wanted to do was to give the Roman commanders at Capua a shock which would loosen their hold upon the city. Hence, though the beginning of his march was sudden and secret, the march itself was deliberate and public. As soon as he was across the Vulturnus he took the road to Cales, swept the country with fire and sword from Suessa on the west to Allifæ on the east, and advanced on Rome by Venafrum, Casinum, Aquinum and the Latin Way to Anagnia and Labicum, heralded by the fires

¹ Livy's account XXVI, 7-11, is not to be rejected. He is almost certainly right about the route. If some of his statements are wrong so are some of those made by Polybius. The latter tells us that Hannibal wanted to frighten the Romans into raising the siege of Capua; yet he depicts his march as secret—i. e. a contradiction.

which nightly reddened the sky and the smoke which proclaimed his presence by day. It was a dramatic gesture with just that touch of realism about it which carries conviction. The towns which locked their gates and flew to arms; the crowds of panic-stricken refugees who poured into Rome, driving their cows and sheep before them – the children who crowded the markets with the family geese and fowls – these took the matter seriously enough, and had every reason to do so. Eyes strained from the walls of Rome saw the elephants come striding up with towers upon their backs and swarthy drivers perched upon their necks; fingers pointed out the victor of Cannæ, riding on his splendid charger near the Colline Gate. But there was no siege of Rome. Hannibal could no more break through those great walls than through the investing lines of Capua. The spectacle began to stream eastward. The dust clouds which hovered over the herds of cattle driven by the Numidian horsemen; Hannibal's coal-black charger, the laden wagons, all began to disappear on the road to Samnium, and the elephants ambled after. Adventurous Roman troops, headed by the consuls, hastened to follow. But although the cloud, seen from Rome, travelled away again, as Hannibal marched south he daily hoped to meet armies of frantic Romans rushing to the rescue of their native city. He met none. Instead he met, five days on the return march, the news that not a man or a horse had left Capua. The great march on Rome had been an absolute failure. The gesture had been in vain.

Capua, aware that relief was now hopeless, surrendered. The leading men who were most deeply involved in the rebellion killed themselves before the gates were opened. The Carthaginian garrison had nothing to fear; for Hannibal held Roman prisoners whose lives and limbs stood hostage for them. But the citizens who elected to take their chance of surrender did not come off scatheless. Some were executed by the ancient method of the rod and axe; some died in prison. The corporate existence of Capua was, for the time, terminated. Capua, however, was far from being friendless in this emergency. Voices in the senate spoke on her behalf and secured senatorial intervention against the reckless advocates of vengeance. The consul Appius Claudius was himself a friend. So that although

the punishment that befell Capua was not light, it was not indiscriminate. The object of the senate was to make clear to Italy and the world how little power Hannibal possessed to protect his allies. This object it achieved.

VIII

None too soon did the fall of Capua set free the troops and money which were tied up in the long struggle in Campania. Immediately upon the surrender of the city an expeditionary force was organized for Spain and sailed from Puteoli. The Scipiones were dead. For the moment the war in Spain had collapsed and Hasdrubal once more had the country under his control. The new forces arrived just in time to hold him there.

Stroke and counter-stroke succeeded one another so rapidly that before the news of one had sunk into the minds of those who heard it, another had changed the state of affairs. The capture of Syracuse, the death of the Scipios, the march on Rome, the fall of Capua, the new situation in Spain, were followed by the appointment of a new Roman commander for the Spanish war; and this appointment, although at the time it probably seemed curious rather than important, was looked back to by succeeding ages as one of the determining events of the war. The two Scipios had held the Spanish command for some seven years. They had been supported but they had not been interfered with by the Roman government. While the magistrates of the republic were charged with the conduct of the war elsewhere, the Scipios were allowed to treat Spain as a sort of family affair of their own. Hence, when at last the appointment of a commander became inevitable, there was a pause. The senate had no particular nominee. It hoped that a candidate whom it could approve would submit himself for election, but it had no list of names. No one had taken an interest in the subject; no one was waiting for his opportunity. The Assembly which met to elect the Spanish commander found that there was no business before it.

One of the strangest episodes in the whole of Roman history then followed.

As soon as it was clear that no other candidate presented himself, a candidate came forward in the person of Publius Scipio, the young officer who had saved his father's life at the Ticinus,

and who had organized the fragments of the Roman army after Cannæ. This very young man had held the office of ædile, but nothing higher, and his military rank was that of a legionary tribune.¹ He had not offered himself in competition with other candidates. He came forward only when it was clear that no other candidate stood for election. As for his qualifications, he was the son of Publius Cornelius Scipio, and the nephew of Gnæus. He had taken an interest in the Spanish war. He was awaiting his opportunity. It had come. He asked for the votes of the electors.

They gave them to him. They liked his youth, his courage, his family. They 'admired his impudence.' He was, moreover, the only candidate; and the Assembly voted for him without any dissent whatsoever. He was elected to the command in Spain with the powers of a proconsul. Never before in all the history of Rome had an authority so great been vested in a man so young and inexperienced.

Another pause followed. Even the electors who had voted for him, when they realized exactly what they had done, were a little disturbed. But young Publius had not come forward idly or aimlessly. He addressed the electors in thanks, and made so effective an appeal to them that they dispersed satisfied with their action and full of hope for the future.

The senate remained passive. No religious difficulties were discovered to block the way of young Scipio. He sailed from Ostia with thirty ships to take up his new command. Landing at Emporiæ, he travelled overland to Tarraco, and set to work to reorganize the situation in Spain.

IX

With Syracuse and Capua lost, the advantageous position he had occupied in Italy had slipped from Hannibal's grasp. Philip perceptibly cooled in his ardour. He was a barometer rather than a friend. The grand alliance of Mediterranean powers against Rome was a fading prospect. But the struggle was far from being over; and now a possibility more formidable than the secession of Syracuse or the revolt of Capua

¹ See back, p. 25.

began to loom on the horizon of war – the advent of Hasdrubal over the Alps with a fresh Carthaginian army, an anvil against which Hannibal might yet crack the power of Rome. It was round this possibility that the war now began to centre.

Two defences might be employed by the Romans. If they could prevent Hasdrubal from leaving Spain, the junction with Hannibal would be prevented. Alternatively, if Hannibal could be destroyed before Hasdrubal arrived, all would be well. Could they achieve either of these ends? This remained to be seen. Meanwhile they set to work to attempt both. Young Scipio was the man responsible for attending to Hasdrubal, and Scipio's success was in the lap of the gods. The senate took over the other attempt – that of destroying Hannibal. It approached its task with caution. The verdict of Cannæ had not yet been reversed.

Marcellus, the victor of Syracuse, was the leader whom the senate picked as its choice. He was sufficiently young to have the temperament and the vigour necessary, and yet he was sufficiently experienced to avoid the more blatant of the faults of Flaminius and Varro. The senate handled him with tact. A triumph for Syracuse, said the senate, was impossible – and it gave the conclusive technical reasons which proved the proposition. A radical like Flaminius or Varro might have answered with warmth that the senate always had conclusive technical reasons to prove anything it wanted; but the disappointed Marcellus was more amenable to reasoning. He was allowed an ovation and a consulship, and was skilfully left feeling that the senate would grant him a triumph if only he could produce the necessary technical qualifications. The senate then saw to it that Marcellus should have an army in Italy. Serious complaints had been made against him by the Sicilians, who brought charges which it was necessary for the senate to hear. It suited the book of the aristocratic party to lend a kindly ear to the Sicilians, to divert Marcellus from Sicily, to instruct his successor to adopt a more lenient policy and to place Marcellus in a command much nearer Hannibal. The upshot of all these steps was to put the man they wanted in the place they wanted – and in the temper they wanted too.

X

On his arrival in Spain, Scipio found the whole country south of the Ebro in the power of the Carthaginians. Had he been called upon to take over the command in Campania or Apulia against Hannibal, we cannot say whether he would have proved adequate to the task of working in harness with a multitude of colleagues, most of them commonplace men; but it is certain that given Spain to reconquer in the teeth of half a dozen experienced Carthaginian generals, and half a dozen trained Carthaginian armies, he set about the work with a perfect composure which speaks for his self-confidence. He had fought on the Ticinus and at Cannæ; he had been in touch with Hannibal's proceedings almost from the very day when the Carthaginian debouched from the Alpine defiles, and the methods he now began to employ were the Hannibalic methods. The generation which had grown up during the war had acquired by daily custom and familiarity the habit of thinking along Hannibalic lines. From hearing afterwards the narrative of the unexpected combination by which Hannibal had surprised his opponents, they had begun instinctively to forecast the possible combinations which could be arranged to suit any situation. Scipio was the most perfect product of this new habit of thought. Hannibal had taught his contemporaries a new art of thinking. Scipio was his aptest pupil.

Like Hannibal, he based his actions upon the principle of exhaustive enquiry beforehand: and he set the whole Roman army in Spain to work as his intelligence department. He had brought with him all the information concerning Spain that was available in Rome. He added to it by this enquiry upon the spot. He did exactly what Hannibal would have done. After ascertaining the nature of the positions he ought to strike at, and the situation of the various Carthaginian armies, he struck with extraordinary rapidity. The spot he aimed at was New Carthage—Carthagera—the capital city which had succeeded Gades and Acra Leuca as the centre of Carthaginian supremacy in Spain. Not only so—the city was also the centre of the valuable silver-mining district which, under Hamilcar, had restored the power and prestige of old Carthage after her defeats during the first Punic war. While he prepared his

plans, he talked freely. He intended his statements to be reported to the enemy headquarters – and reported they were. He hoped that they would be believed – and his hope was fulfilled. No one but his trusted friend and chief of staff, Gaius Lælius, knew the truth: which was widely different from his public statements.

He crossed the Ebro, and, travelling with all the speed of which Roman troops were capable, reached New Carthage in seven days' march; one of the great forced marches of history. All his plans had been made beforehand. Before he started he had secretly ascertained the hydrography of the harbour of New Carthage. While, therefore, the garrison was efficiently, with zeal and fury, repulsing the vigorous attack made upon the land approaches of the impregnable fortress, a scaling party waded through the harbour at the right state of the tide, set its ladders against the almost undefended walls, and were in the city before the nature of the attack was realized.

New Carthage was not so much won by fighting as by a Hannibalic jugglery. Fortress, city, harbour, stores, arsenal, garrison and silver mines all alike fell into the hands of the very young man from Rome – and above all, the native Spanish hostages, who were kept there in bond for the conduct of their tribesmen. Seldom has so momentous a success been won with such apparent simplicity and ease.

XI

Meanwhile old Fabius and Marcellus had set out on their errand. The arrangement was that Marcellus should hold Hannibal while Fabius attacked Tarentum; and up to a point this programme worked. A two days' battle near Canusium ended in Marcellus being immobilized by the number of wounded upon his hands, while Hannibal broke away and recovered his freedom of movement. This was a bitter disappointment to Marcellus. Trusting to him, Fabius had laid siege to Tarentum. The Carthaginian commander there had been 'squared' and betrayed the city into Roman hands. Hannibal, ignorant of the treachery, and imagining that Tarentum could hold out for some time, allowed himself to be diverted from the work of bringing relief. He was (it is said)

only five miles from the city when he learned the news. Failing to entrap Fabius, he retired.

The recovery of Tarentum was a distinct advantage, and meant that every considerable fortress in Italy was once more in Roman hands: but the grand aim of the year's work was unachieved. Hannibal's freedom of action had not been destroyed. He was still at large, and was still absolutely independent. The disappointment at Rome found vent in attacks upon the credit of Marcellus. One of the tribunes, G. Publicius Bibulus, even attempted to obtain the removal of Marcellus from his command. Marcellus returned home on leave of absence to deal with the charges. In a great meeting in the Circus Flaminius more than the problem of Marcellus was thrashed out. The whole subject of the war was reviewed: the victory of Scipio in Spain – all the hopes of quick success which once had been raised by Varro.

Bibulus said – as others of his party had said before him – that the aristocrats were responsible for the war, and now were fighting it at the expense of the common people. He attacked the whole Fabian method, and the supremacy of the Fabian policy, which was dragging out the war so that even now no end was in sight. Hannibal, he said, had lived much more of his life in Italy than in Carthage.

Marcellus was a good debater. He had no difficulty in proving that he had done all that was possible and was not to blame. As he still remained the most promising Roman general, the Fabian party seized the favourable occasion to nominate him for the consulship. In the state of feeling created by the great debate he was successful in obtaining election, and returned to his command with full consular powers, still more determined than before to obtain a victory in the field against Hannibal. But the episode had dangerously excited and inflamed his mood, and it was now necessary to calm him. Against such a man as Hannibal, who systematically exploited any touch of excitement in his opponents, this mood involved risks.

The attempt to knock out Hannibal was therefore still in a very questionable state. The immense efforts which the Romans had put forth, the legions they had raised, the taxation they had borne, the loans they had incurred, were now, in

their total effect, almost beyond human endurance: they had, at inconceivable cost of money and courage, restored the pre-Cannæan position only to find that they were still confronted by a task beyond their power. Hannibal's mobility and power of manœuvre were still unimpaired. If Marcellus suffered another Cannæ, the results this time might give Hannibal all that he wished. The allies could not carry on much longer. Great caution was demanded. Religious difficulties and augural technicalities were thrown in the way of Marcellus. Even when he reached the front, the augurs checked his ardour with adverse omens. Crispinus, his colleague, abandoned an independent campaign in Bruttium in order to remain with Marcellus.

Hannibal was as keen as ever. Just when the Romans were thinking of a battle, and were taking these elaborate precautions to prevent Marcellus imprudently involving himself in a general action, Hannibal brought off his coup – and as usual, it struck at the blind spot, the point which nobody was thinking of. Marcellus and Crispinus, reconnoitring their ground with a view to 'safety first' tactics, did not know that they were being secretly watched by a hidden observer. A signal brought Numidian horsemen up from a concealed position: the two consuls were caught, their escort cut down, and Marcellus was slain. Crispinus survived for some time, but died of his wounds. This was Hannibal's answer. If Marcellus were the hope of Rome, Hannibal had put stop to his account.

The senate gave up. Clearly, Hannibal was not to be destroyed just yet. The combination of Hannibal and Hasdrubal would have to be prevented at the other end.

XII

Even here they were disappointed. Hasdrubal determined to take risks in order to reach his brother. The fall of New Carthage had been serious; the native revolt which followed it was more serious still; but Hasdrubal calculated that all these local reverses would be wiped out by a great victory in Italy. His determination, therefore, was to break out of Spain, leaving Scipio there to win, if he could, a purely local success. The decisive battle should be fought on Italian soil.

Scipio did his best to hold Hasdrubal. At Bæcula, however,

the first battle of that name, he met a man only a very little less cunning than Hannibal himself. Hasdrubal pushed one army against Scipio, and left it to cover his retreat, while with his expeditionary force he set out on his march. Scipio could not prevent the operation from succeeding. Taking the westerly route through the Pyrenees, the Biscay end, Hasdrubal made a circuit through Gaul, wintered there, crossed the Alps by the Mont Cenis pass, and reached Italy without mishap. He had learnt from his brother's experience. His passage of the Alps was a less romantic but a better organized military operation. In the spring following the death of Marcellus, therefore, Hasdrubal was in Italy. Hannibal was free to move, and the critical moment of the war was approaching.

The fate of Rome – the future of the world – hung upon the approaching battle. This time it would be decisive. And the omens were by no means altogether in favour of Rome.

XIII

All men have heard of Hannibal: most have heard of Scipio: but the fame of the actual consuls who fought the decisive battle remains still strangely obscure. Few know even the name of the eccentric and quarrelsome Livius, or the gallant and obstinate Nero; yet these two men were unusually representative of the race from which they sprang. We shall meet, later on, with other members of the Livian family, who showed the same marked features of character as Marcus Livius Salinator. As for Claudius Nero, he was a typical Claudian, brilliantly clever, incurably obstinate, hopelessly perverse in temperament; a man who feared nothing – not even that terror of weak men, responsibility. So far as brains were concerned he was not especially likely to beat Hannibal; but if ever Hannibal made a fatal miscalculation, it would probably be over a man like Gaius Claudius Nero. And the only hope now was that Hannibal himself would blunder. It was a very frail hope.

The most serious difficulty which the brothers had to face was the timing of their movements. To co-operate over such vast spaces, with the means of communication which were then available, presented insuperable difficulties. Hannibal, judging by his own experience of the Alps, expected Hasdrubal to be much later in arriving than proved to be the case. When

he discovered his mistake, and that Hasdrubal had already arrived, he started from his base in Bruttium to join him; and Claudius Nero, who was deputed to hold Hannibal, started too. All the way to Apulia, Nero kept upon Hannibal's flank. Then at Canusium Hannibal heard that Hasdrubal had stopped to besiege Placentia; so that Hannibal was now too early. Accordingly he stopped, and Nero also stopped. Hannibal waited for the guiding message which would tell him the time and place at which to meet his brother. Nero also was waiting for it.

Placentia proved too serious a hindrance to wait for. Hasdrubal abandoned the siege, and began his march south—a great army, strengthened with Gallic cavalry, and equipped with elephants. He wrote to Hannibal suggesting a meeting in Umbria. The message was entrusted to four Gallic and two Numidian troopers. Owing, however, to the devious and intricate route by which Hannibal had arrived at Canusium, the party missed the road, strayed down to Tarentum, and were captured by Roman troops. The looks of the party were so highly suspicious that the responsible Roman officer at once sent the prisoners with the letter under seal to the consul. As soon as Nero had had the letter translated, he saw it to be the appointment for junction between Hannibal and Hasdrubal. With Claudian promptitude he made up his mind. The rules about consular provinces could go by the board. This was no time for rules. Hastily writing to Rome, he informed the senate of what had happened and that he proposed to march to join Livius up at Sena Gallica. To say that this letter disturbed the senatorial henroost is probably too mild a statement of the case. They were horrified at the thought of Nero leaving Hannibal unwatched while dabbling in this wild and dubious experiment. But they could not prevent him from doing what he chose and his choice was sure.

Setting out from Canusium, Nero marched rapidly northward, while the unconscious Hannibal remained comfortably in his own lines, unaware of anything out of the common. Word was sent on ahead, and the whole countryside was aroused to facilitate the march. Wagons were ready for

¹ Did he? The reader must make up his own mind about it. The author has his opinion. See Dr. B. W. Henderson in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* XIII, 1898, pp. 417-625.

stragglers; food was provided; eager help surrounded every step. . . . Hasdrubal, coming down by the coast road, crossed the river Metaurus near its mouth, and reached the river Cesano. Then his suspicions were aroused. He had believed that he faced Livius only, and Livius he was ready to fight. But there was evidence that Livius had been reinforced by the other consul. Knowing Hannibal as he did, Hasdrubal could only infer that some startling unforeseen eventuality had come to pass; some mistake or catastrophe. The real truth never occurred to him. As soon as dusk fell, he began to retreat from the Cesano. Reaching the ford across the Metaurus soon after midnight, he found it in spate. The guides deserted, leaving the Carthaginians to make what they could of their position.

Hasdrubal marched up the southern bank of the Metaurus, looking for a practicable crossing. Before dawn he reached the plateau of St. Angelo, and stopped there. If the river could not be crossed, this was the best resort – a strong, well-watered position, and a possible crossing if the flood went down. Many stragglers had been lost during the night, and the Gauls (always weak brethren) had got drunk. He began to entrench a camp. Before it was completed, the Roman vanguard appeared, and it was plain that an immediate battle was imminent. Nero, conscious of the pressing danger that Hannibal might at any moment discover the truth, had urged immediate action, and had convinced his hearers.

XIV

Hasdrubal had made his dispositions with skill. Taking advantage of the ground, he had masked his Gauls (still drunk) by placing them where the declivity forbade a frontal attack. Nero, striving to come into action, found that he was cut off from any effective share in the battle. The struggle was concentrated upon the left, where Livius and the main body of Roman legionaries wrestled with the Spanish infantry, and where the elephants fought. Nero had already taken upon himself one great responsibility. He now took another. Detaching those of his men who were remote from the actual fighting he led them round the Roman rear. This audacious

and dangerous operation was successful. Before either Hasdrubal or Livius were aware of it, Nero's flank attack had been driven home. He penetrated across the rear of the Spanish infantry, passed the Ligurians in the centre, and even reached the Gauls on the other wing. It was the decisive move.

The battle had begun early, and the Carthaginian mercenaries had had a troubled and exhausting night, followed by a hot and strenuous day. By noon they could stand no more. Heat, thirst and exhaustion paralysed their arms. The elephants were running amok, out of control, and many had to be killed by their own drivers. Hasdrubal kept up his men's courage until he saw that no further chance remained. Sure at last that the end had come, he spurred his horse into the Roman ranks and fell fighting. Deprived of leadership, the Carthaginians gradually fled, fell, or surrendered.

It was the Roman revenge for Cannæ. Over sixty thousand men were killed or captured and Hasdrubal's treasure fell into the hands of the Romans.

That night, Claudius Nero started back for Canusium. He carried with him a souvenir for Hannibal. It was Hasdrubal's head. A few days later it was tossed into the Carthaginian lines at Canusium. It bore to Hannibal the humiliating message that he, who had outwitted so many men, had been himself outwitted. He recognized that the decisive battle had been fought, and he retreated into Bruttium.

XV

The news of the battle reached a Rome in which Forum and senate-house were packed thick with waiting and anxious citizens. When at last the news arrived, a scene took place such as Rome had never before in all its history beheld. Elderly senators fought with zealous plebs for the person of the courier. He was swept away from the door of the senate-house, rescued by a sortie of senators and carried into a clear space, till at last his dispatch could be read, first to the senate, and then to the Assembly. Men rushed to the temples. They rushed home. It was true! . . . Those who remember the day November 11th, 1918, will best be able to picture the scene as Livy tells it, and to imagine the spirit in which the senate voted three days'

thanksgiving because M. Livius and G. Claudius Nero had 'preserved their own armies, and destroyed the army of the enemy.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE CAREER OF PUBLIUS SCIPIO AND THE DESTRUCTION OF HANNIBAL

(206 B.C. - 201 B.C.)

I

From the day of the battle on the Metaurus, the war ceased to be the story of Hannibal, and became the story of Publius Scipio. It had begun in Spain; and from Spain came the impulse which ended it.

The remarkable young man who commanded armies and ruled a province before he had filled any of the senior magistracies of Rome owed much of his startling individuality to the very fact that he had never been standardized by passing through the regular offices. Rome had no difficulty in producing a Hannibal of her own; but she did so by reproducing some of the unusual circumstances which had created the original. Scipio himself emerged into fame as a sort of Spanish Dictator. He, too, founded the system and the organization, that were to make him great, through an isolated independence in Spain, where he was free to develop his own ideas and personality. He created pretty much the same uneasiness among the senators at Rome that Hamilcar and Hannibal created among the oligarchs of Carthage. But the contest between the Carthaginians was bitter and irreconcilable. The Romans possessed a more mellow quality. Among them, the analogous contest ended in compromise, accommodation and co-operation. All the brilliance and romantic interest of the struggle must not blind us to certain prosaic facts, the most important of which is that the war was a spiritual war, fought out and settled in the minds of men before a sword was drawn or a ship launched. It was the Roman's greater gift for social action which won the war for Rome. In none was this gift better developed than in Publius Scipio himself.

His tact, his good will, his charm of manner and character, his wisdom and far-seeing policy not only forged his own army into a perfect instrument to his hand, but ranged behind him a very large number of the native Spanish chiefs whose influence was decisive in his favour. Without his intellectual powers, his other qualities would have been of no effect; but without the simple human feeling which bound men to him and won over the hesitant and the suspicious, his intelligence would have been fruitless. The essential fact about Scipio was the fact that men liked him. Scipio, organizing workshops for his men, and chucking the infants under the chin, was the man who conquered Hannibal. In some ways the Roman Hannibal was a distinct improvement on the Carthaginian model.

II

A single year sufficed to destroy the Carthaginian power in Spain.

While Hasdrubal Barcides was on his journey, and during the campaign which ended at the Metaurus, the Carthaginian commanders in Spain were quiet, waiting upon events. When the news of the Metaurus was known, no question any longer remained that a decisive battle for Spain must be fought in Spain itself. If fresh help for Hannibal were to be organized upon a large scale by his surviving brother Mago, then Mago must have the country at his disposal. Had the Romans lost the battle of the Metaurus, Scipio might have disappeared quietly back to Italy. Now, as it was, he had to be pushed out – and it remained to be seen whether he were so easy to push.

Early in the year, the Carthaginian forces, hitherto scattered in the garrisons of central and south-western Spain, were concentrated and native auxiliaries were called up. Hasdrubal Gisconides and Mago joined their armies at Ilipa on the Bætis, a little west of the spot where Cordova stands. Scipio's information showed that the concentration was a serious one, which indicated the intention of fighting a decisive battle. He too raised strong forces of native auxiliaries. Marching slowly south from Tarraco to Castulo, he found the Carthaginians again at Bæcula. Evidently they meant, if possible, to fight on ground of their own choosing – and the climate of southern

Spain probably suited their African troops. Scipio was quite willing.

The Carthaginians seemed to think that they could afford to wait for the most favourable circumstances. Day after day they paraded for battle, but made no attack. They meant Scipio to have the additional disadvantage of the offensive. Day after day he paraded opposite them, but made no move. But they were dealing with a man who, like Hannibal, exploited the assumptions of his opponents. Day after day the Carthaginians took ground in the centre, with Spanish auxiliaries on the wings, and the Romans similarly took the centre of their own line. As soon as Scipio was reasonably sure that this order would not be varied, he sent round a special written order overnight. Next morning Hasdrubal was aroused at dawn by the attack of the Roman cavalry. Jumping out of bed, he naturally ordered the usual parade, which every one familiarly knew. Once it was taken he could not easily change it, especially in the face of a hostile advance. He then found that Scipio had turned his own line inside out, massing his Spanish allies in the centre and extending his Romans on the wings. By adopting this formation, Scipio gave the Roman units space to move and manœuvre.

As the Roman line advanced, it extended wings of light infantry and cavalry which rapidly came into contact with the Spanish auxiliaries of Hasdrubal. The trained Roman troops had easy work in enveloping, breaking and chasing the loosely organized tribesmen, while the African troops stood helpless and unemployed in the centre. To avoid the enveloping movement, Hasdrubal made a general retirement in good order. A storm prevented the Romans from following up their success. The battle ceased without a decision.

During the night, however, Attenes, chief of the Turdetani, the local governing tribe, abandoned the camp. Two towns promptly surrendered to Scipio. Taking this to be the beginning of a general rot among his native allies, Hasdrubal waited until the following night to begin his retreat. Scipio's pursuit was hot and determined. By taking a short cut, he intercepted Hasdrubal at the river-crossing and diverted him from the road to Gades. Harassed by the cavalry, caught up by the fast marching legions, and badly cut up, the survivors of the

Carthaginian army at last took refuge on a height by the sea, where they dug in. As soon as ships arrived, Hasdrubal and Mago escaped by sea, leaving the army to its fate.

III

The 'second battle of Bæcula' was a model of its kind, perfectly illustrating the principles of war as they were prior to the invention of gunpowder and mechanical traction. So effective were the steps by which Hasdrubal was outmanœuvred and his army dispersed and destroyed, that Scipio did not wait to see the end. He returned to Tarraco, leaving his lieutenant Silanus to complete the work.

Scipio did not need to wait in order to see the results of the battle. He perfectly knew what they would be. His business now was to get into touch with Africa while the moral impression was still fresh. His father and uncle had been in communication with Syphax, the chief of the Massæsyllians of Mauretania; and he now sent Lælius across by sea to visit him. Syphax was quite amiable; but on one point he was clear – he would do nothing at a distance. Any treaty he made with Scipio must be at a personal interview.

Almost at the same time Silanus returned from the west, having finished the work of dispersing Hasdrubal's army. Among other items, his report contained a statement of communications made to him by Masinissa, the Numidian chief who had for some time past been the foremost cavalry leader of the Carthaginian armies in Spain. The possibility of establishing relations with Masinissa altogether changed the situation. Numidia was much closer to Carthage, and with Masinissa's help it might be a far more practicable proposition to invade Africa from Sicily, with all the resources of Italy at hand, rather than from Spain in conjunction with Syphax. But as it was now all the more important for Scipio to see Syphax and judge his character, the proconsul set out by sea and crossed to the African coast.

In doing so, he took his life in his hands. No Roman ever fell into a more dangerous nest of hornets than Scipio when, entering harbour on the African side, he found Hasdrubal Gisconides also entering it with a superior fleet! But Scipio's instinct never betrayed him. He knew whom to trust. Syphax

was true to the code of the barbarian tribal chief. He invited the two antagonists to his own hospitable board, and chuckled over the spectacle of them there together. He even tried a little diplomatic peace-making. Scipio, however, could not discuss the war. Hasdrubal liked him, but appreciated the position. As he said, Scipio was not there for his health. When the proconsul returned to Spain, it was with a strong suspicion that Syphax could not be wholly relied on. Hasdrubal had seen too much.

Another incident threw further doubt on the suitability of Spain as a jumping-off ground. A casual illness of Scipio's had extraordinary effects upon the political situation. Exaggerated reports were soon current: some of the chief native tribes north of the Ebro revolted, and at Sucro there was a mutiny of Roman troops. The recovery of Scipio led to the immediate collapse of revolt and mutiny: but it was obvious that Spain was not sufficiently safe to be made a base for the invasion of Africa. As soon as he was fit Scipio travelled to Gades and had a secret interview with Masinissa outside the city. The two men came to an excellent understanding together, and when they parted Scipio prepared for his return to Rome.

The whole war was transferring itself back to Italy. Mago, evacuating Gades, wintered in the Balearic Islands on his way to Liguria. Since he could not cross the Alps, this was his road to join Hannibal. Scipio reached Rome before the consular elections. He made his report to the senate, and applied for a Triumph. The senate smiled and refused. But the electors of Rome entertained a warmer feeling for him. Here was the man who could beat Hannibal! He was elected to his first consulship by the heaviest poll of the war.

IV

Scipio's colleague was Publius Crassus, who happened to be Pontifex Maximus, the religious director of the Roman State, and who therefore by existing law was not allowed to leave Italian soil. This being the case, the two did not follow the usual rule of casting lots for the distribution of provinces. Scipio took Sicily as a matter of course, since Crassus in any event could not go thither; and Crassus took Bruttium and the command against Hannibal.

Scipio's plan was to obtain permission to carry the war into Africa. Here, however, he encountered questions of principle. Before such a plan could be endorsed by the senate, a great reversal of policy had to take place, and the effects of the battle of Cannæ had to be cancelled. Nor only so. The curious resemblance between Scipio and Hannibal had not escaped keen and critical eyes at home. Scipio's whole position was questioned. What was he? — a Roman consul, or a budding Dionysius? . . . Old Fabius led the opposition.

The contest was a remarkable one. Fabius was old enough to be Scipio's grandfather; and the difference in their ages perhaps had something to do with the difference in their policies. Scipio wanted to employ human energy and human intelligence to their full capacity. Fabius was still firm upon the danger of running risks. Hannibal (said Fabius) must be destroyed in Italy. There was no reason to suppose that Scipio could succeed where no other man had ever succeeded, and defeat Carthage in Africa. In saying this, Fabius certainly had reason upon his side. If Scipio were willing to gamble on being another Alexander, well and good; but could his countrymen afford to gamble upon it? And there was another question. Fabius enquired whether he were correctly informed that Scipio had said that if the senate refused him the powers he wanted, he would appeal to the Assembly.

Scipio temporized.

Failing to extract any satisfactory reply from Scipio, Fabius now turned to the bench of Tribunes of the People, which sat inside the bar of the House. He asked their support. It is evident that the tribunes were listening attentively, and following the course of the debate. They were even less in love with dictators than Fabius was, and the fact that Scipio might appeal to the Assembly for exceptional powers was no recommendation in the eyes of the men who embodied its normal powers. They did not want any exceptional powers at all; and in this they were prepared to support Fabius. Accordingly they answered the question of Fabius by a statement which had official force. If Scipio left the decision to the senate, that decision should be final, and the tribunes would not afterwards allow the subject to be put before the Assembly. But if he were intending to appeal to the People in the event of an adverse

decision in the Senate, then the tribunes would protect any senator who refused to vote.¹

Having won this domestic Cannæ, Fabius sat down. Scipio asked for time to consider the matter, and during the adjournment he consulted his colleague Publius Crassus. The latter advised him to leave the decision to the senate. To challenge the tribunes, as well as probably a majority of the senate, was not worth while. Adopting the course advised, Scipio was rewarded by attaining the substance of what he wanted. The senate was careful not to drive him into the arms of the radicals. It gave him the right to lead the Roman forces into Africa; but it did not allow him to invoke the procedure of the citizen conscript levy. He might go to Africa, if he were willing to make it a voluntary enterprise. This compromise was as much as he needed. Scipio was quite capable of organizing the war on such a basis.

V

The ingenious and tactful compromise which was arranged between the party of Scipio and the party of Fabius, enabled the invasion of Africa to be undertaken without any disturbing political crisis. The wisdom of the senate's action became visible during the year. Some new policy was necessary. Things could not go on as they were, on the old Fabian plan. After wintering in the Baleares, Mago landed in Liguria, near Genoa, and began to prepare a new campaign with the object of joining Hannibal. There were thus still two Carthaginian armies in Italy.

Scipio's call for volunteers and subscriptions showed clearly how tired Italy was of the Fabian policy. The list of subscriptions from the Etrurian industrial towns is a curious sidelight upon the life and labour of Italy: Cære sent corn and provisions, Populonia supplied iron from the Elban mines, and Tarquinii provided sail-cloth; Volaterræ, Perugia, Clusium

¹ The practical result would have been a 'scene' in the House, a refusal (backed by the tribunes) on the part of many senators to vote on the motion, and then an appeal to the Assembly, which would certainly have been swayed against Scipio by such previous events.

Some of all this depended upon Roman customs and usages the full force of which does not all at once appear to a modern observer. Considered as Parliamentary or Congressional tactics, the procedure of Fabius was very effective.

and Rusellæ sent timber and corn; Arretium undertook the supply of smith's-work; while from the central Italian agricultural communities, which always provided the best soldiers of Rome, the volunteers came thick. Thirty new ships were built for the expedition, and were launched complete, forty-five days after the timber came from the forest. Lælius made a journey to Africa and had a personal meeting with Masinissa, who complained of the slowness and caution of Scipio. Masinissa did not forget to add a few words in disparagement of that contemptible traitor, Syphax. Although he himself, Masinissa, owing to the blackguardly machinations of Syphax and Hasdrubal, was at present without the normal resources of his kingdom, he was quite able to make himself unpleasant to those gentlemen: a message which Lælius duly reported to his chief.

The Carthaginians, meanwhile, under the firm impression that Syphax, not Masinissa, was the ally upon whom Scipio was relying, proceeded assiduously to cultivate Syphax. He was married to the daughter of Hasdrubal Gisconides, and in many other ways made to feel himself loved and respected in Carthage. Hasdrubal persuaded him to send a message to Scipio informing the latter of this new alliance, and explaining the difference it must make to the agreement they had signed. The complications introduced into the situation by this system of cross-purposes, though highly amusing, had an inconvenient side. It was impossible for Scipio to hush up the fact that Syphax had made some kind of communication, and equally impossible to explain the truth. The only resource was to publish the message from Masinissa, attribute it to Syphax, and hurry on the preparations.

At the earliest practicable moment the great armada – something half way between a crusade and a filibustering expedition, rather than a state enterprise – sailed from Lilybæum and after an uneventful passage, troubled only by fog and calm, landed at Pulchrum – Fair Head – at the mouth of the Bagradas river, a few miles north of Carthage. There the expedition dug itself in, while with one consent the country-people packed what goods they could and set out for safety. The stream of refugees that began to pour into the cities of northern Africa was the first announcement that Publius Cornelius Scipio had arrived.

VI

Fabius had been right in stressing the difficulties that would attend an invasion of Africa. They were precisely the difficulties which had proved too much for Hannibal in Italy. It remained to be seen whether Publius Scipio could succeed when Hannibal had failed.

Masinissa, with two hundred Numidian riders, joined him immediately. Tiny as the reinforcement was, Masinissa himself was a cavalry leader of genius, and he was a far more profitable ally to Scipio than all the hosts of Syphax were to Carthage. Cavalry was the arm that Scipio needed. If he could but provide Masinissa with men to lead, the combination of Numidian horsemen and Italian infantry would be irresistible. His first steps therefore were directed to this end.

The preliminary moves of the African war were almost as complex as those which led up to Cannæ. Scipio's aim, like Hannibal's, was to find a military objective to hit. He began by advancing up the Bagradas valley and laying siege to Utica.

This step had the result of evoking something tangible in the way of military opposition. Hasdrubal Gisconides had raised a mercenary army, and was joined at Carthage by Syphax with a great host of Numidians and Massæsyllians. The advance of this great combined army relieved Utica and caused Scipio to retreat back to the sea-coast. Choosing a rocky promontory which jutted out into the sea, half-way between the mouth of the Bagradas and the city of Carthage, he built a fortified camp and settled there for the winter. Hasdrubal and Syphax did not venture to attack him in such a position. They blockaded him, and so the matter remained.

Scipio seems to have been quite comfortable in these winter quarters, with their access to the sea and their communication with Italy. There was no difficulty in running such blockade as the Carthaginian fleet instituted. In the meantime Scipio was willing to parley. Syphax, still persuaded that he was a friend of both parties, had evolved a plan by which Romans and Carthaginians were simultaneously to evacuate one another's territory, and peace was to be made on the basis of the pre-war situation. These terms Scipio could only smile at:

but he went on discussing them. It was just possible that he might yet detach Syphax from the Carthaginian cause. As the winter wore, and the peace envoys reported more and more of their visits – especially the inflammable nature of the material out of which Syphax's camp was built – Scipio's interest in the negotiations awoke, and he began to contemplate another possibility. Little by little all his best officers were given an opportunity of visiting the Carthaginian camp in the train of the 'Peace Envoys.' By degrees the Carthaginian camp was thoroughly surveyed and became familiar to all the men who would conduct operations against it. Spring came. After a few preliminaries, Scipio explained to the astonished Syphax that his council was opposed to the terms, and that he must therefore terminate the negotiations.

Neither Syphax nor Hasdrubal fully realized the need for precaution. The secret of Scipio's intentions was so well kept that even his own troops believed that he was planning a surprise attack on Utica. Only at midday before the decisive night did he call a meeting of his legionary commanders, and communicate his plan. His spies were called in, and examined; and the whole project thoroughly discussed in the light of the information obtained during the winter. When the conference dispersed, all the orders had been given.

The first detachments moved out of camp at nightfall. About midnight, the rest followed. By about three o'clock in the morning the Carthaginian camp had been silently surrounded, and all the places of egress were watched. The camp of Syphax was the first to be attacked. Set on fire by unseen hands, it burned furiously and its occupants came bolting out in disorderly panic. The men of Hasdrubal's camp rushed out unarmed to watch the fire, and themselves fell into a similar trap. Once the stampede began, there was no stopping it. No resistance could be organized. Both camps were destroyed, and both armies were dispersed.

This night's work revolutionized the situation in Africa. Scipio had become master of the open country, and his men had been given confidence. Syphax however had only retreated as far as Abba on the road to Numidia where a corps of Spanish mercenaries joined him. Hasdrubal collected and re-organized his scattered troops, and the two once more united their forces

at the place called the 'Great Plains,' Magni Campi, further up the Bagradas valley, whither Scipio advanced to meet them. But this time the encounter took place in different circumstances and different moods. Scipio's men were learning absolute trust in his skill.

With the Spanish infantry prepared to deal with the Romans, there seemed this time no room for trickery. Scipio apparently arranged his dispositions according to the usual rules – infantry in the centre, cavalry upon the wings. At the first charge, Masinissa and Lælius swept away the cavalry wings opposed to them, and hunted them into the distance. Scipio then calmly wheeled out fresh infantry wings from reserve in the rear, enveloped the Spanish infantry, and destroyed them. They fought valiantly to the end – but they had been outwitted, and they had no chance. Syphax and Hasdrubal took refuge in Carthage.

The capture of the upper Bagradas valley opened the way to Numidia. While Scipio proceeded to take the surrender of the provincial towns – some of them were not sorry at the change – Masinissa pressed on to Numidia. It was his own country, his own kingdom, where his own Massylians lived, though Syphax with Carthaginian aid had appropriated it. Lælius accompanied him.

Masinissa was warmly welcomed, and he was soon at the head of much greater forces than he had hitherto led. It had been foreseen that he would need to fight for Numidia; and when the hosts of Syphax, called up from all quarters, began to gather for the fray, the wisdom of sending Lælius became apparent. Boldly as Masinissa fought, he would have been overwhelmed by numbers had not the disciplined Italian infantry been present. Not only were the desert hordes routed, but Syphax himself was unhorsed and captured – the first great prize of the war.

Numidia was now open, and Scipio had very clear ideas concerning why he wanted it. At a solemn assembly at the Roman headquarters, honorary decorations were bestowed for the distinguished services rendered. Lælius received a victor's crown – but Masinissa received the full triumphal ornaments. Nothing greater than this, Scipio told him, was given to any Roman general. From this time forward the proud, the happy,

the flattered Masinissa held at Scipio's disposal the great prize which Scipio most wanted – those thousands of desert horsemen with which Hannibal had made much of his fame. Scipio could already rely on beating Hannibal at every point save the cavalry arm. Now he could beat him at this too.

VII

The Carthaginian senate recognized the serious state of affairs. To play for time was the only resource; and this the senate proceeded to do. While preparations were made for the defence of Carthage, messages were sent to Mago in Liguria and to Hannibal in Bruttium, calling them to the defence of the city; and pending their arrival a humble deputation was sent to wait upon Publius Scipio to negotiate terms of peace. He could not very well complain if afterwards (following his own example) Carthage threw over the negotiations as soon as they had served her purpose.

To the deputation Scipio made a few brief remarks. He had come to Africa (he told them) not to negotiate terms of peace, but to obtain a complete victory – a hope which events had justified. The principles of Roman policy, however, forbade him to refuse terms. He specified the terms: The surrender of all prisoners, refugees and deserters; the evacuation of Italy; the evacuation and surrender of Spain and the Islands; the surrender of all war ships save twenty; a supply of wheat and barley, and a money indemnity. He gave three days for the consideration of these terms. If they were accepted, then Carthage might have an armistice while the deputation went to Rome to receive the formal consent of the senate.

The terms were accepted, and in due time the deputation appeared in Rome. Its spokesmen expressed before the Roman senate the convictions of the Carthaginian oligarchs – that the Carthaginian state as such was not responsible for the actions of Hannibal, and that the recent war had been conducted, not by Carthage, but by the Barcide government in Spain. This statement of the case was one that the Roman senate never liked nor really believed. When the treaty was recited, the senators could scarcely believe their ears. Did Scipio seriously contemplate that Mago and Hannibal should return with their armies to face him in Africa? A somewhat agitated debate

followed. One of the senior members of the house thought that Scipio was the best judge of what he wanted. Others suggested an adjournment for enquiry. Another proposed the expulsion of the envoys, who evidently did not come in good faith. Lælius, who was in Rome, and who was requested to express his views, thought that Scipio had certainly not intended that Mago and Hannibal should transfer their armies to Africa, as intact fighting forces. Ultimately the senate concluded that it must not interfere. The envoys were given their passports, and Scipio was notified that he must be the judge whether to accept such a treaty.

To this day the exact motives of Scipio remain a mystery. The uneasiness of the senate was fully justified by the remarkable terms of the treaty; but, as Q. Metellus had truly remarked, Scipio surely knew what he was about. Publius Scipio had gone to Africa with the express purpose of drawing Hannibal thither. He had made the most elaborate preparations for bringing the military situation into a condition in which he could gain a definite and decisive victory. It cannot have been an accident that the result of all this work was that Hannibal should face him in Africa under certain definite disadvantages, which we will presently note more particularly. If the Carthaginian envoys thought they were deceiving Scipio, they were themselves being deceived by a man with a mind infinitely subtler than their own.

The envoys arrived in Carthage to find that their mission was already superfluous. Hannibal was on the way, and his approaching advent thrilled Carthage with an intoxication of excitement. No matter what the graver seniors and the bitter oligarchs might say, the public opinion of Carthage was wildly for Hannibal. The treaty was recklessly ignored. Some of Scipio's supply ships were seized, and his demands for redress were laughed at. . . . If he wanted the Carthaginians to put him morally in the right, he had his wish. Hannibal was landing at Leptis, without cavalry: he had been forced out of Italy, and compelled to fight in Africa: and here he was, pressed to a definite conclusion at last, in circumstances as favourable as possible for a Roman success. And now, after all the elaborate chess-play that had gone before, two final moves were required to cry check for ever to Hannibal.

VIII

Hannibal landed at Leptis with infantry only: he had no means of transporting horses. His first action was to try to obtain cavalry. He succeeded in obtaining some 2,000 from Tycheus, a kinsman and supporter of Syphax – but clearly this was not enough. Scipio, meanwhile, cast off his links with his fleet, and began a rapid march up the valley of the Bagradas, sweeping the country clear as he went. His express messengers were already on the way to summon Masinissa from Numidia. The object of Scipio was to effect his junction with the cavalry forces of Masinissa; while the aim of Hannibal was to bring him to bay before this happened. Time was in favour of Hannibal. If the coming battle could be postponed, every day increased the chance of really effective forces of Massæsylian cavalry reaching him from Vermina, Syphax's son. But could it be postponed? If two dæmoniac intelligences were now meeting by far the more effective was the intelligence of Publius Scipio. He was playing a winning game – and he knew it.

The devastation of the Bagradas valley caused the Carthaginians to implore Hannibal for a speedy decision. While he sternly answered that he must be the judge of military questions, he had very little choice – for he must, if possible, catch and hold Scipio before the arrival of Masinissa. Leaving Hadrumentum, he struck westward across dry and partly desert country, by a route which would bring him to the headwaters of the Bagradas. If he could gain these in time he might possibly cut Scipio off from Numidia. Scipio, meanwhile, having crossed the river, came wheeling round across the march of Hannibal, as if to block his way. What had happened? Had Hannibal caught Scipio? It was necessary for him to know.

Hannibal's spies were detected in the Roman camp. They were not executed. They were shown round the camp and sent back to Hannibal with the message that they might tell him what they had seen. The news they had to communicate was almost certainly the essential bit of information he required. Masinissa had not arrived. Hannibal had therefore done what he wanted – he had caught Scipio, and could fight on level terms. But the mere fact that Scipio had allowed this information to

reach him argued that the Roman general was conscious of his disadvantage, and would welcome a compromise. Such a compromise would be very much to Hannibal's private interest. . . . If, on the other hand, Masinissa had arrived, the wise course for Hannibal would have been retreat, delay, and postponement of a decision until he had received an adequate cavalry force.

Hannibal sent a message proposing a personal interview. Scipio agreed, but reserved the right to fix the time and place. He then moved to Margaron and camped in a favourable position with ample water supply. Hannibal, notified that all was ready, moved camp close to Scipio, and found that he was in a position with a very imperfect water supply, so that with his elephants he would find some difficulty in remaining there. This was not the worst: for in the meantime Masinissa had arrived, and Hannibal was held tight in face of an army overwhelmingly superior in cavalry.

Outmanœuvred at every point, Hannibal nevertheless had his personal interview with Scipio. They met on neutral ground between the armies, attended only by their interpreters. Both were well acquainted with Greek, and would have no difficulty in holding a long and intimate conversation in that language if they wished to do so. But what actually happened at that interview is an insoluble problem. The version which the historian Polybius obtained from the records of the Scipio family is obviously a very carefully edited account of what must have been a thrilling occasion. The two cleverest and subtlest men of their age talked together for some time. They parted, professing to have reached no agreement; but it is certain that from that day they entertained a warm regard for one another: and though they reached no agreement, they may have established an understanding: which sometimes is more important than agreement.

On his impression during this interview, it is probable that Hannibal now based his actions. He could estimate the man he was dealing with. To remain immobile was impossible in view of his imperfect water supply. To retreat in face of Masinissa's cavalry was equally impossible. He must fight.

IX

The orders were issued that night; and on the morning following the armies made ready for battle. The troops on both sides paraded with full consciousness that this was the decisive event. If Hannibal lost, Carthage was doomed. If Scipio lost, he and his army were cast away in a far country, and in the hands of a cruel people. And of the two, it is probable that the Romans valued their own skins at a far higher rate than the Spanish and Ligurian mercenaries valued the safety of Carthage.

History has preserved fairly full details of the marshalling on that morning, when two of the greatest generals of antiquity were setting the board against one another. Their respective advantages and disadvantages were a curious and mixed assortment. Hannibal was very weak in cavalry: but he had eighty elephants, an offensive, not a defensive arm. There was a possibility that, properly managed, these elephants might breach the legionary line and prevent the Roman superiority in cavalry from ever coming into action at all. This was Africa, and the elephants were in their own climate. They were not the frozen hungry things that had shivered in the cold winds of the Alps.

Scipio had therefore a complicated 'lay out' to plan. He designed it with due consideration for many factors, military and moral. He could trust the discipline and training of his veteran infantry. He set out the companies, not in their usual chess-board, echelon arrangement, but in straight ranks and files. He armed some of the numbers with thick iron-shod stakes for hurling at the elephants, and the legionary trumpeters were ordered to stand by to use their instruments. He faced this arrangement with mobile light infantry, and massed the African cavalry of Masinissa on his right, and the Roman cavalry of Lælius on his left. The whole conception was that he had first to receive a very severe attack on his centre, and then – if he survived it – had to carry out the same aggressive enveloping movement which he had evolved at the second battle of Bæcula and the battle of the Great Plains. It was to his interest to get the battle over as soon as possible. No one knew whether Hannibal were not awaiting cavalry reinforcements which would wholly change the military situation.

We may assume, without excessive risk, that Hannibal *was* awaiting such reinforcements, and that if he could but have delayed the battle for a few days, he could have received them. But Masinissa's scouts had drawn an impenetrable veil between Hannibal and Numidia. Hannibal could not form any idea when his hoped for reinforcements would arrive. It might be days; it might be a few hours. Although obliged to use his elephants, he intended, if they failed, to turn the battle into a stolid defensive struggle, and to avoid all risks. He might yet drag it out long enough to survive. The whole business in any case would be touch-and-go, in which the victor (whosoever he might be) would creep home by the most desperate hazard.

X

The elephants were troubled, restive and untrained. Their attack on the Roman infantry failed. Worried by the organized uproar with which their approach was greeted, some wandered through the 'lanes' and went out of the battle; others turned tail and drifted down the battle-front. The fatal defect of an elephant as a fighting-machine is his nerves. Chased down the line, warded off by the spears of the Carthaginian infantry, bothered by the darts which Masinissa's men hurled at them, they took the line of least resistance and blundered into the cavalry wings, throwing them into hopeless disorder. Masinissa on one side, and Lælius upon the other, promptly setting their own men in motion, had no difficulty in driving the disordered Carthaginian wings before them and pursuing them off the field. They gave them no chance to recover, but pressed after, scattering them in relentless pursuit.

Stripped of its wings, Hannibal's infantry centre stood firmly upon the defensive. Its instructions were strict. After a long struggle the Ligurian and Gallic footmen of the first line broke and fled. They were not allowed to break the ranks of the Africans who stood behind them; they were resisted – and the Romans, coming up to the fresh assault, found the Carthaginian second line intact. Not until the Roman second line advanced could this formidable obstacle be overcome. Finally the Africans too were broken, and dispersed; and beyond them became visible the serried ranks of Spanish and Italian infantry,

with levelled spears, entrenched behind a breastwork of bodies, and behind ground slippery with blood.

So far, Scipio's tactics had succeeded; but the cost was great. Only his third line was fresh, and the question still remained whether he now had sufficient forces to break Hannibal's infantry reserve. His precise calculations were never divulged to the world. We cannot say what instructions had been given to Lælius and Masinissa, or what events delayed their return. So far, there was no sign of them. Scipio called a halt, rearranged his line, and wheeled out fresh wings to envelop the enemy infantry, while Hannibal's phalanx looked on silent and impassive. The next stage of the struggle was the last stage. Hannibal presented a steady wall of defence which could not be broken nor tricked. Almost to the very end the issue was completely in doubt. The tactics of *Bæcula* and *Magni Campi* had failed. Hannibal was surviving. Only towards the end of the day, when the exhausted Roman troops were wearying, the tactics of Cannæ arrived on the scene to destroy their creator. Back came Lælius and Masinissa, to surround and envelop the rear of Hannibal's reserve, and to overwhelm it with their numbers. Hannibal himself, knowing that all was now over, rode for Hadrumentum on one of those matchless black coursers which no Roman was likely to overtake. Twenty thousand prisoners fell into the hands of Scipio. Most of them must have been men of this infantry reserve which very nearly won the battle of Zama for Carthage.

A few days later – on the 17th of December – the long expected cavalry came from Massæsyllia, sufficient in numbers to turn the scale against Scipio. It was too late. Harassed by the Romans, and surprised by the news of Zama, it scattered back into Numidia.

On such hazards the fate of nations hangs.

XI

Hannibal was called to Carthage to advise his fellow countrymen as to their next course. He had no hesitation in advising them to make peace. A curious confidence marked his assurances. Scipio, having invested Carthage by sea and land, received the peace envoys at Tunis. Hannibal proved right. The peace terms were startling in their mildness. Complete

autonomy in all domestic matters was granted to Carthage; her African territory was guaranteed to her intact. She was merely required to surrender all Roman deserters, fugitives and prisoners; to surrender all ships of war save ten, and all elephants; no more elephants were to be trained for war. No war was to be made without the consent of the Roman people. Masinissa was to be guaranteed in his dominions. The Roman army should be fed until it left Africa; and an indemnity of 10,000 talents of silver should be paid, and one hundred hostages, delivered.

Through Hannibal's powerful support these terms were ratified at Carthage. At Rome there was much discussion. At length the Assembly gave the senate authority to conclude a peace, and named Publius Scipio as the plenipotentiary.

In this way the long struggle with Hannibal was terminated. It was a singularly mild termination to a struggle so sensational and so prolonged.

Fabius Maximus did not live to see Publius Scipio roll up the Triumphal Way behind his yoke of milk-white horses. A very gorgeous triumph it was – the most splendid ever seen in Rome. But old Fabius had already been gathered to his fathers; and among the ancestral images which honoured the home of his son, there can have been few that gave more honour to the house than that of the man who had first checked the career of Hannibal. With him perhaps died a spirit of wisdom, conciliation and good feeling which Rome could ill spare. A time was to come when Rome had many men like Publius Scipio; and when she would gladly have had more like Quintus Fabius.

CHAPTER IX

THE POLICY OF TITUS QUINTIUS FLAMININUS

(201 B.C. - 190 B.C.)

I

The dramatic finale of the Hannibalic war was not perfectly obvious to the young men who had grown up with it. They noticed no finality. To them a score of loose ends were calling for attention; a hundred unsolved problems, a thousand unfinished beginnings; and that which, to a past generation, would have seemed the marvellous and decisive conclusion of an era, was to the rising generation a prelude. In the years that followed the battle of Zama and the surrender of Carthage the lights seem to shift and alter; new actors appear upon the stage; the setting imperceptibly changes; we have passed into a new scene of the pageant.

The stage has extended; the theatre has widened, the audience increased. When Rome began her wars against Pyrrhus she was a purely Italian state, with her attention concentrated upon purely Italian affairs. Now, eighty years later, Rome the conqueror of Carthage, the successor to Phœnician as well as Syracusan and Etruscan power, ruled directly or indirectly the whole basin of the western Mediterranean and stood forward as the representative of the civilization of the west.

Such a power as she had become could not and did not remain isolated from the other great powers, her peers. In particular she had to rationalize her position with respect to King Philip and Macedonia. Philip had intervened against her during the war; the treaty he had made with Hannibal still reposed in the Roman archives; and he had allowed trained Macedonian infantry - that is to say, royal troops - to be enlisted by Hannibal, with whom they had served at Zama. These were serious acts of hostility, not to be ignored. In addition to this

the geographical position of Italy caused the existence and the proceedings of Macedonia to be of particular interest to Rome; for just as Sicily adjoined the toe of Italy, and furnished an easy access for a Carthaginian army, so Macedonia adjoined the heel of Italy, and furnished a similar, though not quite so easy access from the Greek mainland. Any nervousness the senate might feel on this score was amply justified, as we shall see when we come to the age of Sulla and Cæsar. Sulla in after years (with far smaller resources than those of King Philip) made a successful invasion of Italy from Macedonia; and Antonius thought the plan good enough to attempt against Octavian. The possibility was there; and if the Romans paid too high a compliment to King Philip in fancying him man enough to organize such an invasion, at any rate it was an error on the safe side.

Macedonia, moreover, enjoyed a prestige shared by no other state. She had given the world what was, up to this time, the greatest political fact in human history – Alexander the Great. The life, the deeds of Alexander, and the consequences which had sprung from them, had changed the face of eastern Europe and western Asia. For a brief time one vast state had stretched from the coast of Macedonia to the banks of the Indus and the Oxus. It had broken up, but it had left behind it a wonderful series of monarchies occupied by Macedonian Kings – the Ptolemies of Egypt, and the Seleucidæ of Syria still survived with their wealth and power little diminished; and Macedonia herself, although she was no longer ruled by the dynasty of Alexander, was still thought of as the power which once had given the world those conquering Macedonian armies. Macedonia was the reality of which Pyrrhus and his men had been the brilliant shadows. If, after all the tests to which Roman armies had been subjected, there still remained a military system capable of defeating them, any one could guess its name – it must be the unconquered Macedonian system, with its armoured phalanx and twenty-foot pikes and its Indian war-elephants (very different animals from the African elephants of Carthage).

Hence the proximity and the actions of Macedonia had to be taken very seriously by the Roman statesmen; all the more so because, through Macedonia, Rome was brought into indirect relationship with the other powers of the Hellenistic world.

II

The increase in the area of the Roman dominion meant that Rome was now influenced by tides in international affairs which once upon a time had left her unaffected. The policies of Mesopotamian powers had been of no importance to the city by the Tiber; but they became of the utmost importance to the head of a civilization dominating half western Europe. In old times – the days of the Quintii, for example – the trade routes between Europe and India had run overland across Persia, up the Mesopotamian depression, and across the Taurus to the Greek cities such as Smyrna, Miletus and Sardis. It was indirectly from this trade that Athens and Syracuse had become rich: for it had set all the minor currents of prosperity moving whithersoever it came. But the conquests of Alexander had opened up alternative routes. The fertilising current had been displaced south, and now ran by the sea route from India to the Gulf of Aden, and thence to Alexandria and to Carthage, which had grown rich upon their monopoly of the Indian as well as the African trade. The gradual decline of such cities as Athens and Syracuse was due to this displacement. Etruscan commerce had also faded; the once mighty cities of Tarentum and Croton in Greek Italy had shrunk. All the life of western Europe had been affected by these results of Alexander's conquests. To Rome, the whole problem might seem to be of merely academic interest; but there was another power whose interest was more than academic – and that was the Seleucid power of Syria. The Seleucid realm included the greatest of all victims of the change – namely, the ancient trading cities of Mesopotamia. It became urgent to find a remedy. The action taken and the policies adopted for this purpose affected the Roman world and the payment of the Carthaginian war indemnity.

Just about the time when young Hannibal in Spain had been stepping into the shoes of his father, another young man had been succeeding to power in Syria – Antiochus, the great-great-grandson of Seleucus Nicator. While Hannibal was conducting his great struggle with Rome, Antiochus had been conducting a quieter, less sensational, but hardly less important struggle. He had reconquered and reunited the old realm



The East in the First Three Centuries B.C

of Seleucus, the Persian provinces, the Mesopotamian plain and the Syrian maritime district, so that the ancient dream of Mesopotamian statesmen was revived and realized in a state that possessed contact with India at one end, and with the Mediterranean at the other. This was the position when, after the battle of Zama, Rome began to take an interest in the general situation in the east. She came face to face with Antiochus, taking a similar interest in the west. Having gone so far, Antiochus saw no reason why he should not go a little farther, and extend his realm through Asia Minor to the confines of Europe. It would clear the trade route right up to and including the Straits – the Dardanelles.

The scheme was a splendid one. It was no idle megalomania. Antiochus was merely using military force as a means of clearing the trade routes and policing them.

III

The case of Macedonia was pressed upon the attention of the senate immediately after the conclusion of the treaty of peace with Carthage. While the war with Hannibal was on foot, the senate had attempted to restrain King Philip by entering into diplomatic relations with the independent city states of Greece. These acted as checks upon Philip's action and as sources of information, from which the senate constantly heard of any important change in the situation. Among other counter-measures Philip had replied by entering into an alliance with Antiochus. He had something to bargain with; for Ptolemy Philopator had recently died, and Ptolemy Epiphanes – a child of five – had become ruler of Egypt. Philip negotiated a secret treaty with Antiochus, by which they were to divide among themselves the out-lying provinces of Egypt. The prey was rich; for the lands in question produced a revenue which would be valuable additions to the resources of their new masters. Hence, during the years while Scipio was organizing and fighting his African campaign, a more or less masked war of diplomacy and persuasion was raging in the east. Philip was by no means defeated in the preliminary moves. He built up one of those typically Greek systems of alliances, never quite solid enough to trust to, yet outwardly imposing to the spectator, which had constituted, so far, the

highest flight of the Greek in statesmanship. Rome made it her special aim to engage the sympathies of the republican cities: while the wealthy and powerful Egyptian kingdom, alarmed at the coalition against her, added herself to the Roman side.

The senate might have been content to continue to defend Roman interest with these weapons of diplomacy, had the situation remained stable; but Philip had no intention that it should do so. His own diplomacy was merely precedent to such rapid and definite action as should forcibly transform the situation in his own favour. When the Athenians reported that the Macedonians were actually in Attica, and when the city of Rhodes sent a long communication respecting Philip's policy in Asia, the senate saw that it was necessary to defend the allies of Rome by force.

No enthusiasm for a forward policy was shown by the Assembly when the necessary motion was laid before it. One of the most serious decisions in the whole history of Rome had to be taken. For years past Rome had been incessantly fighting. A very large proportion of her citizens were only acquainted by hearsay with the noble state of continuous peaceful industry: but they still entertained a conservative prejudice in favour of regarding themselves as cultivators of the earth who sometimes fought. This was the first opportunity which most of them had had for beginning a practical acquaintance with civilian life and labour. If, at this juncture, they threw it over, and returned to the military life, it might be a fateful decision: it might mean that they were to become a city of soldiers who sometimes – when not professionally engaged – worked: and this would constitute a reversal of the whole basis on which the Roman tradition, up to this point, had rested.

The motion for war with Macedonia was therefore almost unanimously rejected by the Assembly. But Rome was not now entirely free to choose her own course in the matter. She was bound in honour to stand by the allies whom she had induced to defy King Philip: and there was a practical point of view which influenced the electors. By neglecting to support Saguntum, Rome had been obliged to fight the war with Hannibal in Italy. By neglecting to deal promptly with Philip

now, she might incur a similar fatal responsibility. The Assembly, swayed by these arguments, finally reversed its decision, and gave the senate the vote it wanted.

And in fact there was no choice. Soon after the decision had been taken, a message from the Egyptian government was received. The Athenians had asked help of Egypt, which was prepared to give it, unless Rome herself preferred to take the necessary steps. The senate returned its thanks, and replied that it was intending to act. It would have been impossible to hand over to Egypt the position of protector to the Greek cities. Rome in her own interests must retain that status for herself.

But the decision did involve momentous consequences. From the day on which it was made, the Roman was no longer a cultivator who, according to the law of his country, fought in its army: he became a soldier who superintended his little estate when he was not otherwise engaged.

IV

No sooner had the Macedonian war developed, than it proved, like its predecessors, to be as much a political as a military war. Its course was determined by the amount of success achieved by the Romans and the Macedonians respectively in the game of acquiring allies. Philip had begun by acquiring Antiochus, and Rome by acquiring Egypt. The prospective intervention of Antiochus in Asia Minor enabled Philip to concentrate his own activities upon Greece. Rome had acquired Athens; and the presence in Attica of a Roman fleet and army which was successful in destroying the pirate stronghold of Chalcis, and in checking Macedonian depredations, stiffened the courage of the Achæan League to refuse to support Philip. With the Achæans went most of the Peloponnesus. When the council of the Ætolian League met, it heard addresses from representatives of Macedonia, Athens and Rome. That it broke up without a decision was significant, for it meant that central Greece did not intend to support Philip. The Ætolians were only waiting to make sure that the Romans were the stronger side before joining them. When from his base at Apollonia the consul P. Sulpicius Galba made a raid into the interior of Macedonia, Philip retiring before him, the Ætolians came definitely down on the Roman side of the fence. No decisive

battle was fought. Philip's defensive war was perfectly effective, as far as it went. But the result of the first year's operations was that Greece as a whole was decisively ranged on the Roman side.

The Macedonian war, therefore, might be described as a war between Macedonia and a *bloc* of Greek states headed by Rome. The reason why the Greek states rallied round Rome was that they believed that the Italian city – itself a republic – would consult their political ideals and prejudices with more sympathy than monarchical Macedon. Whether Rome could have subdued a combined and organized Hellas is a problem which we may be content to pass by as insoluble: but it never arose. Rome fought the war as the head of a league of Hellenic states.

Despite, therefore, the differences of race, language and customs which separated the Hellenes from the Italians, Rome was dealing with the Greek states exactly as she had dealt with the Italian states of an earlier age; she claimed to liberate them, to organize them, and to protect their best interests and highest ideals; she came as a leader, not as a repressor; she came not to destroy but to fulfil.

This point of view found its perfect expression in the policy of Titus Quintius Flaminius, the consul to whom the Macedonian war fell in the third year of its course. The ancient and honourable name he bore was no bad presage of the policy he was to develop. There was very little of the idealist about Titus Quintius. His great gift was for a fine and intelligent common-sense which was never deflected from its course by haste or irritation. His portrait, as the Greek artist engraved it for the coin struck in his honour,¹ suggests some of these gifts. He was a diplomatist and a statesman rather than a soldier, and he was at his best on the platform and in the conference chamber. He always had plenty to say and he could say it with crisp and jovial art. The art of being convincing is the subtlest, and the least describable of human arts; and it is certain that T. Quintius possessed it. He was not one of those persons who cannot listen patiently nor reply adequately. He listened attentively to everything that was said to him; and he answered in full.

Recognizing that the policy adopted by Sulpicius Galba was

¹ See plate II, facing page 200.

the right one, Titus Quintius set himself not to repeat but to develop it. He picked with great care the troops who were to accompany him abroad, for he planned a decisive campaign.

It is impossible for the reader of Livy or Polybius to study the record of Greek warfare in this age without being struck by its petty, scrambling, indecisive nature. Infinite harm must have been done to later Greek civilization by a continual destruction of life and property which had not the excuse of leading to any definite end. Roman warfare had the merit of being decisive; and Titus Quintius proposed to lay before the Greek states the surprising novelty of a war that came to a definite and unmistakable end.

v

Immediately upon his arrival in Macedonia, suitable intermediaries arranged an interview between Titus Quintius and King Philip. The latter – although he had begun the war by expressing his willingness to fight the Romans, and his conviction that Macedon was as mighty a name as Rome – had subsequently grown uneasy at the way in which he was being encircled. He was willing to explore the avenues to peace.

According to the principles which Titus Quintius laid down, as governing the discussion, the question of peace turned upon whether Philip was willing to restore and to respect the autonomy of the Greek states, and to compensate them for damage. Philip was so amicably disposed that he was willing to take upon himself to restore all the cities he had himself acquired; where he stuck was over the idea of giving up his control of subjects he had received by inheritance. He suggested the idea of drawing up a list of names. When T. Quintius proposed to begin the list with the Thessalians, Philip bounced up in a rage and bounced out of the room – for the Thessalians had been Macedonian subjects since before the days of Alexander the Great, and to demand their liberation was to demand the dismemberment of Macedonia.

The demands so formulated by Titus Quintius were excellent propaganda. They convinced the Greek states that the Romans were serious in their zeal for political freedom. The consul had recognized that until a decisive battle had been fought, neither side would really settle down to a workable agreement: so he

had not troubled himself to find a formula on which both sides could agree.

The conference had taken place above Apollonia in the Aous valley, the great highway south-eastward over the mountains into Thessaly. Through the help of a special guide, a shepherd, Flamininus was able to turn Philip's position by a secret march through the mountains. The king, followed by the Romans, retreated up the Aous to the divide, and down into the valley of the Peneus.¹ Here he found himself in the broad rich Thessalian plain. In order to render them useless to an enemy, Philip destroyed some of the strong places; but Pheræ resisted the process, and he had no time to wait, for now the Ætolians and Athamanians hastened to fall upon his flank, and the legions were pressing upon his rear. The Epirotes, who hitherto had been conspicuously neutral, began to express their warm attachment to the victorious party. One sharp lesson to the town of Phalorium, which attempted to resist the Romans, and the whole of Thessaly fell into the hands of T. Quintius. The consul forbade all plundering or disorder. Philip retreated to Tempe, whence he could easily withdraw into Macedonia. The whole movement had been on a great scale, and had been completely effective.

But the season was somewhat late, and the main object of the consul, a decisive battle with the Macedonian army, was now improbable. Titus Quintius determined to settle for the winter at Anticyra in Phocis, on the gulf of Corinth – a good central place where he would be in touch with Italy by sea, and could renew his stores and supplies, while at the same time all the various states of Greece would be easily accessible. As Phocis was pro-Macedonian the military occupation of the country was a farther benefit to the common cause of the states; and it cut Bœotia (also pro-Macedonian) off from the convenient land routes of communication with Philip. Elatea – a strong fortress – for long held out, but at last fell into the hands of the Romans: and with it, the key to the land routes of central Greece.

The Achæan League, long hesitant, now decided with three dissentients to declare for Rome. One of the dissentients was the city of Argos. The result was that a chain of three great

¹ Compare the very similar march of Cæsar, Ch. XVI, section vii, below.

cities – Sparta, Argos and Corinth, still held out in Peloponnesus. All the power of the allies, helped by Attalus, could not however capture Corinth with its Macedonian garrison. So the winter passed.

VI

The change in the Macedonian war wrought by Titus Quintius was not unappreciated at Rome. When the successful candidates in the consular elections had been announced, and the victors made ready to ballot for provinces, two tribunes, L. Oppius and Q. Fulvius, arose, to object to Macedonia remaining subject to the ballot. The successful conduct of the war, they contended, had been imperilled by the repeated changes of commander. No sooner had one man begun, than it was time for him to surrender office and make way for another. Now that Titus Quintius had made a good beginning, he should be allowed to finish it. Finally after some argument, the tribunes and the consuls agreed that the senate should decide. The senate decided that T. Quintius should remain in Macedonia, and that the consuls should share Italy between themselves.

As soon as spring returned, Titus Quintius made ready to complete his work. His first action was to pay a visit to Thebes, the centre of the last really pro-Macedonian region of Greece. The surrender and conversion of Thebes cut off the Macedonian garrison of Corinth from any communication with Philip except by sea, and isolated Argos and Sparta, which had private reasons for favouring Philip. With the fall of Thebes it became finally certain that Philip would need to risk a decisive battle. No other chance was now open to him. All his allies had been detached from him. To avoid battle now was tantamount to surrendering Greece into Roman hands.

Quintius left Elatea and advanced again into Thessaly. At Xynias he was joined by an army of the Ætolian league, and a contingent of Athamanians. Finally he fixed on Pheræ as his headquarters. Philip, coming from Larissa, approached Pheræ from the north.

The great plain of Thessaly is a saucer rimmed with mountains, and divided into two by a ridge of hills – Cynoscephalæ – running north and south. Pheræ was at the southern end of

this ridge. After a little desultory skirmishing it became clear to both commanders that it was impossible to fight in a region of intensive agriculture, where the ground was cut up by walls, fences, ditches, gardens and blind roads. They both began to deploy westward towards Scotussa, which lies upon the ridge. Quintius, taking the route towards Pharsalus on the western side of the ridge, was out of sight of Philip, who was travelling along the eastern side. Storm, rain and darkness interrupted their contact. At last Philip, coming over the ridge in some confusion, misled by excited subordinates, blundered into a position where he had to fight before all his forces had arrived. The battle at first developed as a succession of accidents rather than as the result of definite plans. The sections of the Macedonian phalanx already on the field, laying down their twenty-foot pikes, began to advance in close order, sword in hand, steadily sweeping the Romans before them. Titus Quintius, hurrying across to his own right wing, saw that the next sections of the phalanx, which had just arrived on the battlefield, were taking ground opposite, wheeling from column into line – a manoeuvre necessarily a slow one for men carrying the twenty-foot pike. Leaving his left to win or lose, Titus started up the hill with his right wing.

The Macedonian phalanx was designed for use upon the level. The Roman manipular system had been invented by Samnites, for use upon the Samnite mountains, and it therefore had all the advantage on broken ground. Coming up now, the mobile maniples burst in upon the phalanx before it had achieved its impenetrable front. Its whole virtue was in its mass. Once disrupted, it was at the mercy of the Romans.

For generations the Greeks had been accustomed to war conducted under comparatively polite and civilized conventions. Arrow-wounds, and pike wounds – wounds with the narrow point – they knew. But they were horrified and unnerved at the hideous wounds inflicted by the rip-and-slash methods of the legionary swordsmen. The flight and dispersion of the phalanx at this part of the field laid open the flank of the other, the victorious wing. One of the legionary tribunes, grasping the situation, wheeled twenty maniples round upon this exposed flank. This betrayed again the weakness of the phalanx – it could not face to a flank and fight. Hence the

victorious wing also was broken and routed. The next section of the phalanx, arriving in the midst of the catastrophe, raised its pikes erect in sign of surrender – the ‘white flag.’ The Romans, ignorant of the conventions of Greek warfare, burst in upon it and dispersed it before the consul could learn the meaning of the sign, and hold them back. Eight thousand Macedonians – the pick and flower of Philip’s army – fell on the field; five thousand became prisoners.

VII

After an armistice for fifteen days had been declared, a conference with Philip was arranged. Before it took place, the allies needed to settle a common policy – and there were signs of disagreement among them. The Ætolians demanded the death or deposition of Philip.

This demand Titus Quintius flatly refused. It was not part of Roman policy to crush those whom Rome had defeated. No suggestion had ever been made of any vindictive policy towards Philip. He warned Ætolians furthermore that they were forgetting the very serious fact that Macedonia formed a barrier which protected civilized Greece against the barbarous tribes of Thracians, Illyrians and Gauls. Peace would not be made upon terms which made it easy to start another war; but that was all he would allow.

The feelings of spite and rancour which had been the curse of Greece, and had crippled her political evolution, here came into illuminating contact with the spirit of conciliation which enabled Rome to build up those leagues which had unified Latium, and then Italy, and might yet unify wider lands than these under the reign of law and concord. Philip, to do him justice, entered with great sympathy and dexterity into the door which Quintius held open for him. He made no stipulations; he was willing to leave all decisions to the senate – a proceeding which invariably drew from that august body the greatest possible amount of fairness and consideration, and which on this occasion immediately enlisted the consul’s influence on his behalf. It was settled that Philip was to give hostages, enter into a bond of two hundred talents, and take up negotiations direct with the senate at Rome; the hostages and money to be returned if the negotiations fell through. The Ætolians had

a despondent feeling that they had fought in vain if all this good will was to be shown the vanquished.

Philip's moderation was by far the wisest resource he could have adopted – for all his world was falling about his ears. On the very day of the battle of Cynoscephalæ the Achæan League defeated the Macedonian garrison of Corinth. As soon as the news of Cynoscephalæ was known, Acarnania, hitherto hostile, came in to the Roman alliance. News of a Macedonian defeat in Caria by a Rhodian force was longer in coming; but it added its weight to the general sense of Macedonian collapse.

Up to this point there had been no reason why Antiochus should trouble himself to help Philip. In most men's thoughts, Macedonia had remained, until the battle of Cynoscephalæ, the greatest military power in the world. The prestige of Alexander still lingered about her. Syrian troops, unaccustomed to the climate of Greece, could have made very little difference at Cynoscephalæ; money would scarcely have helped Philip, whose own resources were ample. Macedonia had been defeated by a power whose military system and diplomatic policy were better than her own. But Antiochus, for all that, was perfectly ready to take up his own share in the struggle as soon as the call came to him. His army crossed the Taurus this year, and reached Sardis in Asia Minor, while his fleet sailed along the coasts of Cilicia, Lycia and Caria, taking possession of the Egyptian provinces. The maritime city of Rhodes – a warm partisan of Rome – at once prohibited the Seleucid ships from entering the Ægean or undertaking any naval operations in support of Philip. For some time negotiations were proceeding between Antiochus and the city, in which the king displayed patience and good temper. Then came the news of Cynoscephalæ, and Rhodes, knowing that there was now no question of Antiochus saving Philip, abandoned an opposition which she could barely have made good. She turned her attention to the more profitable task of preserving the political liberty of the Asiatic Greek city-states. Only Rome could organize the necessary action to oppose Antiochus. Attalus, the protagonist in earlier struggles to protect the Greek cities, was dying. Not long after, he was dead; and with him died the last Greek capable of political leadership on the grand scale.

The senate was wide awake to all the possibilities of the case. It had received the emissaries of Philip, and had promptly sent them back with a commission of ten members who knew what terms the senate would endorse. P. Sulpicius and P. Villius, who as consuls had had experience of the country, were among the members. The ten, with T. Quintius as chairman, were authorized to settle the terms of peace upon the spot.

The peace followed the new type which the senate had prepared for communities outside Italy. The right of making external war was withdrawn from Macedonia save in cases approved by the senate; the Macedonian army was to be reduced to five thousand men and her navy to five decked ships – a mere police patrol. The use of war-elephants was prohibited. All the Greek states of Europe and Asia were to be free; the Macedonian garrisons were to hand them over to Roman officers before the date of the coming Isthmian games. Certain other cities were also to be evacuated. An indemnity of one thousand talents was to be paid – five hundred down and the rest in ten annual instalments.

The Ætolians sneered. The main difficulty which Quintius and the commissioners had to settle concerned the three great fortresses of Greece – Corinth, Chalcis and Demetrias. The senate had been of opinion that it might be wise, in view of the possibility of war with Antiochus, to occupy these three cities with Roman garrisons. Quintius, however, made a strong stand for the complete liberation of Greece and the complete withdrawal of all Roman troops. In the end he got his way. The sequel proved him wise. He knew the psychology of the Greeks. Their passion was for political independence. For freedom they were willing to throw away even that which made freedom good; but freedom they would have. Quintius saw that they should have it. Had the senate, by a mistaken policy, attempted to hold Greece against the will of Greeks, Antiochus would have no difficulty in creating revolt and discord among these unwilling subjects, when he came – a lion in a lambskin – as a liberator of the oppressed. By a complete withdrawal, the senate ensured that Antiochus should have no defensible excuse for entering Greece. When he did come – and come he certainly would – it could only be under his true colours as an invader: and in that day the cry of Greece would be for the aid of the

Italian republic which once before had liberated her from the yoke of Macedonia.

The commissioners listened, and finally agreed. It was settled that the three cities should be held for a short time, pending a complete withdrawal to be made at a later date.

VIII

The Isthmian Games came round: and the Greek world assembled at Corinth to witness them.¹ On such occasions as this public opinion was moulded. After the seats round the arena were occupied, but before the formal opening of the Games, a trumpeter and a herald entered the ring. The trumpeter blew for silence: and when all was still the herald lifted up his voice amid the stillness and announced that the senate of Rome, and Titus Quintius, its proconsul, having overthrown King Philip and the Macedonians, restored the Corinthians, Locrians, Phocians, Eubœans, Achæans of Phthiotis, Magnetians, Thessalians and Perrhæbians to their own laws and liberties, cancelling all taxes imposed upon them and withdrawing all garrisons from their cities. The vast assembly had gathered in a mood of scepticism concerning the intentions of the Romans. Certain sarcasms of the Ætolians had cut deep; and even those who most appreciated the Roman help felt it an excess of optimism to expect that the senate would completely restore the sovereign independence of the city-states. Even the silence of a vast assembly creates a tide in the air that blows words away. Not all had heard; and of those who heard, not all were sure that they had heard rightly. Cries arose, asking for the proclamations to be repeated. Silence being once more made, the herald lifted up his voice again and repeated his words. There was no doubt about it now; and the shout of joy which arose is said to have been heard as far as the sea. The moment the games were over there was a rush for the pavilion where Titus Quintius sat. He prudently kept well out of reach of his admirers. For hours the cheers were being raised, and garlands were being cast at the feet of the Liberator. Ardent friends of liberty followed an intoxicating day with a

¹It is only within the present generation that our civilization has once more seen Games of this type – and now on a far greater, international and inter-racial scale

somewhat intoxicated night. Lights burned and wine flowed through a glorious evening. By one stroke the astute diplomatist had raised Roman credit to such a height throughout Hellas, and even beyond, that there was no need for the senate to keep a single soldier in Greece. The Greeks themselves became a Roman garrison.

After the Games, the commissioners held a reception of the representatives of various Hellenic states and powers, including those of Antiochus. The king was explicitly warned to leave the city-states alone, and in particular not to set foot in Europe. He was not impressed. Leaving Ephesus, where he had passed the winter, he arrived at the Dardanelles with a fleet and an army. There he began rebuilding the derelict fortress of Lysimachia. Four of the Roman commissioners, on tour to settle the affairs of the Greek cities, met him there.

Some plain speaking took place. Antiochus said that he had no hostility towards Rome. The commissioners replied that no doubt he would say the same even while he was landing in Italy. They warned him that his deeds not his words would count in shaping Roman policy. Antiochus asked what right they had in Asia? He claimed Lysimachia as his own by hereditary right. The conference only came to an end through the arrival of a rumour that Ptolemy of Egypt was dead. The news was not published, and no one admitted knowledge of it, but it resulted in every one discovering that he was called away by urgent business, and the conversations terminated while the king and the Roman commissioner appointed to Egypt each made a dash to reach Alexandria first. In Lycia, Antiochus heard that the rumour was false. Worse than this, off the mouth of the Saros he was caught in one of those storms which are so dangerous to ships in the Mediterranean, and a large part of his fleet was destroyed. The blow was a serious one. For the time being, he retired to Seleucia. The delay enabled the ten commissioners to return to Rome and make a full report. They left no doubt in the minds of senators that a serious and dangerous war would need to be faced. It was resolved that as long as the menace continued T. Quintius should remain in Greece.

IX

Meanwhile, another factor began to count in the calculation: and that was Hannibal. In the event of a serious struggle with Antiochus, what would be the attitude of Carthage? This needed more than a little attention on the part of the senate.

Hannibal had believed in the possibility of a revival of Carthage: and if all Carthaginians had been men such as he was, the belief might have become a fact. But he was no longer the Spanish dictator, equipped with the wealth of the silver mines of New Carthage. The old oligarchic party, which had hated Hamilcar, and now hated his sons and all their works, hated Hannibal, if possible, more than ever when he attempted those reforms in the government of Carthage which were necessary to the prompt and easy payment of the war indemnity. Secret complaints against him were lodged at Rome. According to these complaints Hannibal was in correspondence with Antiochus and was planning war in co-operation with him. In spite of the strong opposition of Publius Scipio Africanus a commission was sent to investigate the accusation. Hannibal wasted no time. The day the commissioners arrived, he fled from Carthage, and took refuge in Asia. He found King Antiochus at Ephesus, and the arrival of Hannibal was one of the favourable omens which induced the king to enter with a high heart upon war with Rome.

The problem of Hannibal's guilt or innocence of the charges brought against him is complicated, and is now, perhaps, impossible to solve. There can be no doubt that he did flee to Antiochus, and that he was received as a friend by the Seleucid king. The presumption is therefore that he had been in correspondence with Antiochus, and that he did regard the king as one of the means by which a revival of Carthaginian power was to be realized. There can be no doubt that the oligarchy at Carthage would feel all their interests imperilled by the policy of Antiochus. The deflection of the trade routes back from Alexandria to Seleucia, their ancient way, would be a deadly blow at the prosperity of old Carthage, and the members of the old oligarchy would be fully justified in exerting themselves to prevent the realization of the plan. The presumption is therefore that real ground existed for the charges

against Hannibal. He was felt to be trying to restore the political power of Carthage by means fatal to her economic prosperity. Hannibal himself, in fact, was largely indifferent to the interests of any particular locality. His country was civilization at large: like Alexander, he was a man whose home was everywhere and his residence nowhere.

Scipio had made every effort to prevent the policy which drove Hannibal into the arms of Antiochus. Having failed, he was now anxious himself to obtain the Macedonian command. The senate, however, was firm. It had entrusted the Eastern policy of Rome into the hands of Titus Quintius, and Quintius had its entire confidence. Scipio had not been interfered with during his campaign in Africa: he must not now interfere with others. Even now, with Hannibal in Asia and a new war – no one could guess precisely how grave – impending, Quintius was confident of the policy of withdrawal.

The hold which he had established over the Greek states was visible at the conference at Corinth at which he announced the complete fulfilment of his policy. It was practically a Pan-Hellenic Council under the presidency of the Roman representative. Quintius informed the conference that within ten days the last garrisons would be withdrawn from Demetrias, Chalcis and Corinth and the keys of the fortresses would be handed over to the rightful owners. He wound up his address with a little paternal advice which is still a model of its kind. Friends should be judged by their deeds not their words: and we should learn whom we may safely trust. Liberty with moderation was a blessing: excess in liberty, as in other things, was a curse. As long as the states of Greece preserved internal harmony and mutual concord, no power could hurt them. Discord and sedition were the tyrant's chance. He begged his audience to preserve the freedom which had been won for them by Roman arms, so that the Roman people might feel that the gift of political liberty had been made to those who were worthy.

When the applause and enthusiasm had died down a little, he asked them to commemorate this day by releasing all Romans who were in servitude in Greece. Many of the prisoners taken by Hannibal during his Italian campaign had been sold to Greek purchasers. Hitherto, Quintius had taken no action

about them. Now he obtained the liberation of many hundreds, without cost to the Roman taxpayer. The conference was still sitting when the gates of the citadel of Corinth opened and the Roman garrison appeared, marching out of the fortress. Amid cries of Saviour! Liberator! Quintius followed them and set out upon his march home. Such admiration and enthusiasm as he obtained is the reward of those wise men who give their fellow men exactly what they want.

X

For two more years the policy of Titus Quintius closed European Greece to Antiochus. When at last he came it was at the invitation of the Ætolians. The rest of Greece was hostile. The result was that Antiochus looked upon European affairs through a strange and fantastic medium – the mind of the Ætolians. Their jealousy, their hatred, their passionate self-seeking distorted all that they saw. They assured Antiochus that all Greece was awaiting him with open arms. When, accordingly, he landed at Demetrias with only a small force, they were appalled at the error for which they were responsible. The sarcasms of the Greeks at large, and the jovial humour of T. Quintius, covered with ridicule the would-be ‘Liberator’ of a perfectly free Greece. Hannibal had prepared a plan for carrying the war into Italy; and if he had been given the means for executing it, there can be little doubt that he would have made good his scheme. But the Ætolians, who added fear to hatred, wrecked this plan by sowing in the mind of Antiochus a distrust of the great Carthaginian. Hence every error was made that could be made. The great invasion disintegrated and fell to pieces. When the Roman armies at last landed, Antiochus fled back to Asia with prestige lowered and pride shorn. Titus Quintius intervened to save the Ætolians from the full consequences of their folly.

Hannibal warned Antiochus that the Romans would now certainly follow him into Asia: and a year later they came – Lucius Scipio in command as consul, and Publius himself in the background to guide his brother’s steps. The Romans brought with them the gift (lost to Greeks for a generation past) of reaching definite decisions. Fierce naval struggles in the Ægean ended in Antiochus losing the command of the sea.

At Magnesia, near Smyrna, Antiochus was decisively defeated, and retired back across the Taurus into Syria.

Thirty years earlier, just before the siege of Saguntum, well within the memories of men not yet old, Rome had possessed Italy, Sicily and Sardinia. She had just begun to touch the coasts of Dalmatia and to intervene against the Cisalpine Gauls. Now, after the battle of Magnesia, she superintended a general settlement of Asia as far as the Halys and the Taurus; her sphere of influence included the whole basin of the Mediterranean.

As we have seen, she had been unable to stop herself. An irresistible logic had drawn her to the Rhône, the Bætis, the Bagradas and the Halys. No pride or exaltation in the achievement buoyed her up. As soon as the settlement of Asia was complete, she withdrew her armies and her consuls; she left the world beyond the Adriatic to please itself and to govern itself once more.

CHAPTER X

THE APPROACH OF THE GREAT CHANGE

(190 B.C. - 133 B.C.)

I

More than one motive inspired the senate when it withdrew the Roman armies from Asia and Greece. Senators had their own thoughts – which sometimes dwelt nearer home than Athens or the Taurus. Curious problems were arising, for which the tradition handed down by their grandfathers afforded no sure solution.

Although the Roman state and its allies had survived intact, the eighteen years of the war with Hannibal had created strains and stresses in the structure of Italian society by which it was now being entirely transformed. A fatal and irrevocable change had touched the old familiar aspects of daily life. The charred ruins and tangled fields which Hannibal had left were not always restored. The men were too often away in the legions; the women and children, in so far as they survived, drifted to the fortified towns. Whole districts in southern Italy, which were nearest the margin of cultivation, became waste. While some of these were afterwards recovered, some remained permanently out of cultivation. As the legionaries were, as a rule, not workmen or labourers, but proprietors, the losses which were sustained in such Roman defeats as Trasimennus and Cannæ had a tendency to diminish the number of small economic units. In the first eleven years of the war the roll of Roman citizens shrank very nearly to half its strength. In many cases the enterprising small proprietor seized the chances that came his way in foreign lands, and became a larger proprietor than before, elsewhere than at home. The whole tendency of the war had thus been to favour the large economic unit. Not only was it possible for large landlords to buy up small properties at an advantageous price, but it became

a public duty on their part to purchase land which the owners could no longer tend.

The end of the war saw a number of results which confirmed this turn of events. It was hardly worth while to spend money and labour on a desperate attempt to grow wheat upon the poorer lands of Italy, when the immense harvests of Sicily and Africa could be produced so much more cheaply. A process was begun which rapidly transformed large parts of Italy into pastoral land; olive-and vine-growing more and more displaced wheat. During those years in which so much of Italian manhood was abroad, those who remained at home picked up the art of employing slave labour. Romans travelled far, and learnt much in those days: they saw the various ways in which social problems had been dealt with in foreign countries: they learnt the methods of Carthaginian farming and industry, and the systems of the Greek and Hellenistic worlds. Partly by force of necessity, and partly by force of example, they began to develop the large-scale economic unit with all its details and implications. In the years after the Hannibalic war the Roman was becoming ever more of a director, and less of a manual worker.

This fact was reflected in a considerable rise in the educational standard. Publius Scipio and his circle represented a level of intellectual and artistic culture immensely higher than any that had hitherto been common in Rome, and throughout the whole fabric of Roman society a corresponding advance took place. Even those circles which had least claim to education or culture experienced the effects of a vast widening of horizons. Romans of a class which, a few generations earlier, had known nothing beyond the local interests of Italy, now had a clear vision of the larger world and its variety. The growing generation was better fed, better dressed and much better taught than its ancestors had been. Whether it was better trained was a question to which we will presently return.

II

The tremendous fall in the number of Roman citizens which took place during the Hannibalic war was retrieved with a rapidity which suggests methods other than that of natural increase—a deduction which is confirmed from independent

sources. Very little direct information has come down to us. We know that slaves were enrolled in the legions during the war. According to Livy, they did very well under the command of the consul Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus – a man of liberal opinions and sympathetic temperament – and a large number received their freedom upon the battlefield.¹ The frequency of Greek names, even in central Italy, a few generations later, suggests that these slaves were more in number than has been recorded, and that many of them were of Greek descent. The registers of Roman citizens were made up by counting in large numbers of Latin and other Italian allies, who had taken up their residence in Rome; and by counting the colonists, who, hitherto, had not been included in the census figures. The plebs always had grounded their claim to Roman citizenship upon domicile rather than upon descent; but from the Hannibalic war we may reckon a great quickening of the process by which Roman citizens were created, rather than born. Constant military service made it almost impossible that the Roman citizen of the poorer class could settle down to family life and bring up children in the old way. The increase of population which could not be brought about by natural means was brought about instead by the continual co-optation of new blood. Foreigners – usually Greeks or other easterners, who were more suited to the climate than were northern or western Europeans – settled in Italy, took Latin names, and in a couple of generations were blended into the native stock. Manumitted slaves tarried a while in the doubtful status of freedmen, and in a few generations were lost in the mass. The Roman quality became less and less a racial one, and more and more a product of education. After he had taken a Latin name and served a few campaigns under Roman centurions, the Greek was indistinguishable from the ancient breed. He took the stamp and passed current.

Consciousness of this fact made the senate particular and sometimes narrow. To preserve the stamp, the distinctive style which made the Roman, was one of the aims of all it did. The Roman dominion depended upon the existence, somewhere

¹ At Beneventum in 215 B.C., Livy XXIV, 14–16. They are mentioned in XXIV, 11, and XXII, 47, as being *two* legions, comprising eight thousand men; see also XXII, 19. See M. E. Park, *The Plebs in Cicero's Day*, p. 13. Tenney Frank, *Economic History of Rome*, pp. 140–164.

within its boundaries, of a power which assimilated and transformed into its own likeness all that came into contact with it. What was this power? What name did it bear? In the earlier age, the patrician body had never had any doubt that it was the custodian of the Roman secret; but since those days, great changes had come to pass; the plebeians had forced their way into the strongholds of power; to the tradition of Rome plebeian statesmen had contributed elements that now had become essential to it, and the plebeian factor in the governing body of Rome could not be eliminated. The very idea and the practical achievement of Roman dominion belonged to the plebeian rather than the patrician statesmen. Law, discipline, organization had been the gifts of the patricians: audacity, liberality, imagination had been those of the plebeians. All now were blended – not with perfect harmony nor with complete effect – in the senate, which every year grew more and more an oligarchy of ex-magistrates who comprehended all the distinctive quality of Rome. From the day when the Assembly forced the Senate to take up the case of *Thurii*, on through the struggle with *Pyrrhus*, with *Carthage* and with *Philip*, the senate had been growing into a governing council which seemed more solidly constructed and more permanent in nature than the people it governed. Even while the Ward Assembly was grasping legislative sovereignty, the senate was achieving the practical control of administration. Under the aristocracy, magistrates had been men of impressive power and authority, entirely apart from the senate. This authority and power were rapidly fading from them. Their work now was supervised by the senate; committees were taking the place of individual responsibility; everywhere the senate's control restrained, openly or covertly, the old personal discretion.¹ Even the tribunes now sat within the bar of the House, and worked in co-operation with the senators. A very simple secret had been discovered. The tribunician veto could be used to prohibit tribunician action. The grand old radical days of the tribuneship seemed to be over.

¹ As an example, we may take the incident of the senate and the consul *G. Cassius Longinus* – *Livy XLIII, 1*. The whole of the earlier chapters of *Book XLIII*, are full of illuminating detail.

III

For all these reasons, the years after the defeat of Antiochus were years of reconcentration. Such vast extensions of territory had been made, or had been possible—such changes in the economic condition and social composition of Italy had come about—that the urgent thing now was to preserve that nucleate structure of the state which had been the secret of Roman power. At any rate for the time being, Roman citizenship became harder to attain. A definite halt was called to the process of absorption.

In addition to the difficulties which have just been described there were problems of a nature much less easy to solve. Roman character itself seemed to be in a state of liquescence. Greater scope for individual action, greater freedom from the criticism and watchfulness of equals, meant greater individuality in the way in which men responded to the temptations of opportunity and circumstance. If Manius Curius had despised gold, it was partly because he had had no purpose to which he could put it. The newer type of Roman who had seen Carthage and Syracuse, Athens, Corinth and Smyrna, knew better to what uses money could be put, and had much improved knowledge of the sources from which it could be obtained. The change was not sudden, nor was it universal. Without many qualifications we cannot call the age of Titus Quintius Flaminius and Marcus Cato—‘the Censor’—a corrupt one: and perhaps after all there never was any age in which Rome could not find a perfectly honest man if only she took the trouble to look for him. Neither Flaminius nor Cato ever altered their plans or changed their opinions for the sake of money. Nevertheless, a deep and serious change did take place in the moral tone of the new oligarchy. For the first time, Romans were found willing to exploit their positions for personal profit. But the struggle against the new spirit began as soon as it displayed itself, and never cried truce. Cato’s own fame was partly based upon the deliberate and unrelenting war he waged from youth to extreme old age against all forms of dishonesty, selfishness, self-seeking, and immorality—and above all, against everything inconsistent with the Roman tradition; and if the code he fought for does not in all respects correspond exactly

PLATE II



Publius Cornelius SCIPIO Africanus
(*Consul*)



Titus Quintius
FLAMMINIUS
(*Consul*)



Lucius Cornelius
SULLA Felix
(*Consul &
Dictator*)

(*From Coins in the British Museum*)

with our own, it was none the less a stern one – and Cato none the less faced odium and opposition for its sake.

The Greek influence, which in some ways reacted so beneficially upon the Roman, had a less favourable side to it. In Hellas itself the Roman almost for the first time encountered the Idealist – the man who talks a great deal, and entertains the loftiest theories, but whose conduct is in startling contrast with his words. Greece was full of men cutting one another's throats in the name of liberty. Just at the very time when the Greeks were revealing to the astonished Roman the existence of philosophy and the possibility of reaching correct ideas upon the nature of society and government, independent of the fads and fancies of men – they were simultaneously demonstrating by their own actions that these correct ideas did not enable them to deal with the practical tasks of government. The Roman learnt to look with scepticism upon the real value of political philosophy and with contempt upon Greek flapdoodle about the holiness of liberty. The Hellenic states did not act upon the good advice given them by Titus Quintius. They quarrelled between themselves, and they quarrelled within themselves. Dishonesty, injustice, impolicy and disloyalty were rampant. The experience of the senate, after a few years of patient trial, convinced it that a little sharp compulsion would often be to the general good. By degrees, the Roman mind was prepared for this event; and it was prepared to meet it with rather more ruthlessness than once might have been the case.

But great and apparently insurmountable difficulties, visible only to the senate itself, stood in the way of more direct interference in the government of the lands outside Italy. The danger was that any attempt to govern these lands might destroy the Roman oligarchy. The power of the senate lay in its complete like-mindedness, and its correspondingly complete unity. Probably no other assembly of men that ever was brought together could be so safely relied upon to produce members who, if chosen by lot, and scattered in distant lands without communication with one another, would all of them spontaneously say and do the same things, and exhibit the same mental pattern. But this like-mindedness was created by continual association, and daily intercourse. To ask the senate

to send its members for long periods to Alexandria, to Smyrna and to Thessalonica, to Gaul, to Spain and to Carthage, was asking it to destroy the daily association which created the like-mindedness which produced the unity. Or, alternatively, if the senate was to supply these places with annual magistrates, its numbers must be vastly increased. But from what source was the increase to come? – and who was to sit in judgment upon the qualifications of the new members? These problems were, for the time being, so difficult that it was simpler to refuse to set up any permanent system of government for the extra-Italian lands.

The senate was well aware of the natural history of the Greek tyrant – the type of Dionysius and of Agathocles, whose careers had unrolled themselves at Syracuse, sufficiently close to Rome. It knew that periods of great personal power, such as that which Publius Scipio had enjoyed, had a most disturbing effect upon the mentality and even upon the morality of those who enjoyed them. If the Roman system were to be preserved, such periods of personal power must be avoided. On all these grounds, therefore, the senate felt it safer to refuse to take over the rule of foreign countries; and when at last it was irresistibly forced into doing so, it was with sincere regret, and with real and well grounded fear of the future consequences.

IV

The Macedonian king was the primary agent in forcing the senate's hand. Twenty-six years had passed since the treaty of peace had been concluded with Philip; and that space of time, short as it was, had been enough to prove the wonderful recuperative effects of peace. The perpetual drain by which Macedonia had been bleeding herself down to the status of a second-rate power had been stopped; population and wealth began to accumulate; organization was renewed and improved. The men of the previous generation had one by one disappeared, and with them had vanished some of their ambitious policies and grandiose schemes. Antiochus had passed out of European politics altogether since the battle of Magnesia. Scipio Africanus died in 185 B.C. at the early age of fifty. He had already ceased to influence the views of his countrymen, and his last years were disturbed by embittered contests

with the new generation of statesmen. Two years later Hannibal died in exile at Libyssa in Asia Minor. He had entered the service of King Prusias of Bithynia, but his place of retreat was discovered and an attempt was made by the Romans to arrest him. Rather than fall into his enemies' hands the great Carthaginian killed himself. In 179 B.C. King Philip departed this life. Thus all the Titans were gone: all the wars seemed over, all the old feuds quenched. The generation of Greek patriots who remembered the tyranny of Macedon had almost entirely died out. Perseus, the son of Philip, succeeded to a kingdom which was richer, more popular and more united than his father's, and which was regarded with more sympathy and more friendly feeling by Hellas at large.

What would have come to pass, if Macedonia could have continued for three generations more to renew her strength and her prosperity in this manner? But Perseus was a man who could not wait nor rest nor withhold his hand from unnecessary action. King Eumenes, the old ally of Rome, made a special journey in order to warn the senate in person concerning the designs of Perseus. The truth of his words was shown by the anxiety of those concerned to counteract his influence, and by an audacious attempt on his life. Two successive commissions, sent to investigate, made reports that caused the senate to prepare for war.

Perseus was so confident of his ability to conduct the struggle with Rome upon equal terms, that he had little hesitation in taking the lead. His army was the finest that Macedonia had possessed since the days of Alexander; his treasury was full; his diplomatic position was favourable. The Romans themselves were conscious that their preparations were late and imperfect. As so often happened, the first year of the war was one in which the Romans strove to make up for lost time and wasted opportunity. Even so, one or two remarkable features of the contest pointed to its probable conclusion. Perseus had very feeble and negative conceptions of war, and only imperfectly realized its methods and objects. He remained almost continually upon the defensive. Finding himself undefeated at the end of the year, he conceived strangely erroneous ideas as to the cause. He offered to conclude peace upon the same terms his father had formerly signed. The Roman

answer – a demand for unconditional surrender – was a shock to him.

The senate now roused itself to action. Roman officers in Greece were sharply brought to book. A consul – Aulus Hostilius Mancinus – was sent out who, without performing any sensational deeds, laid the foundations of victory by training an army. Instead of allowing the Roman military system to rust and perish, Perseus had committed the tactical error of stirring the senate to reorganization and renovation, and had thus brought about the creation of such a force as Rome had not possessed for a generation past.

V

When, in the third year of the war, the consul Q. Marcius Philippus took charge of the campaign, a vigorous offensive policy was at last begun. The army at Palæpharsalus in Thessaly had been thoroughly reconditioned by the reforms of Hostilius, and made an effective fighting force. The new consul realized that war in a mountainous country such as that which parts Thessaly from Macedonia cannot be brought to a decisive end by hesitant and prudential measures. Risks have to be taken, and casualties faced. He began by forcing his way across the ridge of Ottolobus, which forms the northern wall of the vale of Tempe. The pass leads up to Laparethus, where the Macedonians were in force. Indecisive fighting warned the consul that to push a way through might prove impossible. Leaving a deputy to keep the enemy busy, he organized a bold and Hannibalic flank march down the valley of the Sys – a difficult descent, during which it was necessary sometimes to break a road. His energy and leadership¹ triumphed over obstacles that might have daunted a weakling. Perseus, secure, as he fondly imagined, behind impregnable passes, was thrown into panic when the Roman force descended safely to the level between Libethrum and Herculeum. He abandoned Dium and fell back in frantic confusion to Pydna. With inconsiderate haste, he even withdrew the garrisons from the passes. The consul seized the opportunity. By his orders

¹ Livy (XLIV, 3–5) evidently derived his account from some one who took part in the march. The events of this war are especially well worth following upon a large scale map.

the abandoned positions were at once occupied by Roman troops. Penetrating through the vale of Tempe – a pass absolutely impregnable to a frontal attack – the main Roman force entered Dium in triumph. Nothing could better have illustrated the difference made in war by leadership.

It seemed as if the consul had cleared the way for an indefinite advance; but with a prudence as marked as his daring, he restrained the enthusiasm of his men. He found it impossible to obtain supplies; everything had to be brought up from the distant base in Thessaly: and too bold an advance was perilous. To the amazement and disapproval of the army, he gave the word to halt. At the end of the season, when fighting terminated, the Enipeus constituted the boundary between the armies. The consul made preparations for the storage of corn and wrote home to ask for clothing for the troops. He was an excellent type of the capable and business-like Roman magistrate who, without intellectual distinction or brilliant accomplishments, possessed the gifts of organization and leadership. The senate sent him everything he asked for.

The man who drew Macedonia in the ballot for province and succeeded Philippus as commander at the front, was L. Æmilius Paulus. A general survey of the situation in Macedonia was undertaken by a special commission; supplies were gathered, fresh troops raised. The new consul left for the front early in April. Philippus had brought the war to a point at which a decisive battle was possible: Paulus was universally recognised as the man who could fight that battle. He was not precisely loved, but he was deeply respected by his fellow-countrymen. He was the son of the consul who died at Cannæ: he had suffered, in his youth, some of the trying consequences of that fact: and he was an admirable example of the probity, the ability and the severity which the old-fashioned Roman patrician still contributed to the senatorial order. His family was supposed to descend from a younger son of King Numa. He asked nothing for himself; he did his duty with stern and unhesitating promptitude – the more so, the less he liked it – and he had not the slightest respect for pomps and vanities. These were virtues which Romans could appreciate.

The famous speech with which Paulus inaugurated his term of office neatly touches off the man. He had (he said) stood for

his first consulship because he wanted the honour. This second term he stood for, because Rome needed a general. If he was the general they wanted, well and good; no thanks were called for, and he proposed to return none. If they did not like his proceedings, he was perfectly willing to resign – but as long as he was in command, he wanted no back-talk from those under him. He expected their unanimous obedience and support, without attempts to command the commander. This went down well with the citizen electors: and the army, which he addressed in a similar strain, was equally responsive. He impressed upon it that he was not an autocrat. He proposed to hear all available good advice, and to accept the best he could find; but he would have no interference from amateur strategists, nor facile talk among those who were not acquainted with the full facts. He would do his duty, and he expected them to do theirs.

A succession of able commanders had brought the Roman army in Macedonia to a point at which a disciplinarian such as Paulus could produce his full effect. The Roman army which took the field that spring was the kind of force which had defeated Pyrrhus and Hannibal. At Cynoscephalæ the Roman system had defeated the Macedonian. Could it do so a second time? The second time would be decisive.

VI

As in so many other cases, the coming battle was lost and won before it was fought. The very virtues of Perseus as a peace-time administrator caused him to lack that readiness to take risks which is the secret of military success. He shrank from expenditure of money or blood. Gallic mercenary cavalry were available and were ready to fight for him. Their mobility and their ability to attack the Roman lines of communication might have changed the face of the whole war. But he could not bear the thought of paying the price they asked. The Illyrians were willing to make an alliance with him; but he could not bring himself to pay what they wanted. He tried to negotiate with Eumenes – but the price of Eumenes also was too high. Finally, having refused every opportunity of fighting an offensive war, he was compelled to stake everything upon

holding the narrow fortified line of the Enipeus, which he had strengthened with defensive works and mechanical artillery. Several visits to the front convinced Paulus that to push through was impossible. Two Roman expeditions were therefore prepared – one to land troops beyond the Enipeus by sea, and the other, to outflank the position of Perseus by means of the route through the passes of mount Olympus. One of them was a feint. It soon turned out that the naval expedition was the feint.

Starting after dark one night, a strong force of men picked from Italian mountain tribes climbed the paths of Olympus, crossing the southern slopes to Pythium, and then northwards to Petra. The passes were so weakly occupied that there was no difficulty in dealing with the enemy detachments. Some rumour of the movement reached Perseus: but even so, the reinforcements he sent were inadequate. When he heard that the Romans were at Petra, and that his flank was turned, he left the line of the Enipeus and fell back to Pydna. His advisers urged him to fight, and he took ground south of Pydna, where the level was suitable for the phalanx. The Romans followed.

So strong, even yet, was the defensive position of the Macedonians, that Paulus exercised caution. He refused to attack the phalanx. By one means or another he kept the two armies facing, yet immobile. In order to postpone action he took full advantage of the Roman system of augury; he is said to have made no less than twenty sacrifices in succession, each time declaring the result negative. No one could question this. But Perseus could not afford the delay. At last the Macedonian king took the offensive and attacked the Romans.

The wisdom of the consul's policy now became manifest. No series of accidents marked the battle of Pydna such as had marked the battle of Cynoscephalæ. The full unbroken force of the Macedonian phalanx was this time thrown upon the Roman legions without intervening accident. Paulus himself in after years used to describe his own private sensations of awe and horror as he saw the dense massed ranks of Macedonians, clothed in scarlet and gold, their levelled twenty-foot pikes packed tier upon tier in one impenetrable hedge, come surging down upon the Roman line. Now the real import of Roman

discipline became visible. The legionaries grappled with the horror, hacking at the pikes, grasping at the pike shafts, creeping up under the points. It was useless. The terrible pikes—some of them handled by two men—struck through everything they touched, and pinned it to the spot: men were slain as they tried to part the pike-heads, and still the hedge was unbroken. The commander of the Italian Pæligni used the expedient which so often proved effective: he hurled the standard into the midst of the enemy, and dared his legionaries to recover it. But this time the Pæligni died bravely on the pike-points, but could not recover it—a cruel and sanguinary slaughter; and still the phalanx, with slow irresistible step, moved on. The legionaries were driven back willy-nilly—not without some confusion. Paulus rent his clothes with passion and excitement: but his calculations now began to prove correct. It was an impossibility for the phalanx in motion to preserve an absolutely unbroken front. Gaps and interstices began to appear in the uniform line. Men lost touch. The phalanx broke its front.

Before it could halt, dress, and recover its order—always a long business—Paulus had issued the commands which divided the Roman line into its unitary formation. Rapidly the battle was transformed. In place of a Macedonian attack a Roman attack began—not a grand sweep of one vast body, but the assault of many small bodies, acting in concert, and yet independently. While the phalanx was struggling with the task of re-arranging its pikes, the first Roman swordsmen had penetrated into the interstices and had begun the rip-and-slash tactics which had been so effective at Cynoscephalæ, and were no less effective now. The pikes were useless at close quarters. Confusion spread; the pikes, become an intolerable embarrassment, were dropped, and added to the confusion. The small swords of the Macedonians had no chance against the longer and heavier Roman blade. Confusion became panic; panic became rout. Three thousand of the picked phalangites died where they stood, without retreat. The pursuit of the remainder lasted for thirteen or fourteen miles. The battle began at three o'clock in the afternoon; it was decided by four; and when the tired pursuers toiled back to the Roman camp, they were welcomed by torchlight and crowned with garlands. They had

destroyed for ever the prestige of Macedonia and the military system of Alexander the Great.

VII

The settlement of Macedonia after the war reflects back an interesting light upon Rome herself. Paulus was not an absolutely free agent, disposing the fate of Macedonia as he thought good: his measures were taken in close collaboration with the senate, and reflected the prevailing tone of thought among senators. When, afterwards, we come to consider the struggles and the dissensions of the Roman state, we shall find the story much illuminated by such considerations as the Macedonian peace.

Perseus was dethroned and made a prisoner of state. Macedonia was dissolved and reorganized. Its four regions were now reconstituted as four separate republics on whom was bestowed the best system of government which the knowledge and experience of the senate could devise. It was not an Utopian system, for it was not intended to be a perfect state to fit the perfect man. If anything, it was intended to be a perfect state for the imperfect man – warranted to work well with fools in office.

The idea which had always lain at the back of the Roman view of politics was that property was a moralizing and stabilizing force: that a man with no property might think and do at his caprice – but a man with property thought twice before imperilling it. The delight which every normal man feels in the possession of wealth was a force which, rightly channelled, gave him a sense of responsibility and stayed him from unreason. There were, of course, difficulties in the way of the universal distribution of property, some of which we have already noticed. Allowing for these, the men who do possess property will be the men who are most strengthened and restrained by its beneficial influence. Hence, in all her proceedings, Rome had sought the alliance of the propertied classes and had put power into their hands: she had opposed the proletarian revolutionary and had disbelieved in the policy of bestowing power on those who had nothing to lose.

The whole policy of Titus Quintius Flaminius had been based upon these principles. The system of alliances which

had consolidated the states of Hellas upon the Roman side during the wars against Philip and Antiochus had been strengthened by the Roman habit of identifying power and property. Now that Macedonia had to be dealt with the same principles were applied, but with greater system and particularity.

Moreover, the new republics were not autonomous city-states: neither were they city-states with annexed subject cities: they were states composed of a number of cities – multiplex states. This alone was something of a novelty. The chief executive magistrate or president was directly chosen by the electors and associated with him as his advising body was a senate of elected representatives; these together were the governing body.¹ In fact, the new Macedonian states were simple forms of the modern state, as we familiarly know it. The elements were derived from the old Greek system; the governing policy was Roman; the whole was quite naturally evolved out of precedent conditions. When we watch the approaching constitutional struggles of Rome and the solutions she adopted to meet her problems, let us recollect that the principle of the modern state was already in existence, and was available to her statesmen if they cared to trouble themselves about it, or realized its nature sufficiently to stake anything upon its success.

VIII

The attitude of doubt and hesitation which the senate always showed towards the representative principle was connected with its profound conviction that the maintenance of Roman power and even the survival of Rome herself depended upon the preservation of that strong nucleus around which the rest of the state arranged itself. From some points of view the senatorial policy during this period may seem unaccountable, inconsistent and irrational: but when we see it from the point of view of the preservation of the senatorial order and the Roman tradition, the rationality and consistence of the policy become clear enough. Isolated problems of detail could wait, if only this primary question were adequately answered. And for the greater part of the century such a view was generally accepted among the educated classes of Rome.

¹ See Professor Tenny Frank, *Roman Imperialism*, pp. 208–209 and *Classical Philology* IX, p. 49, there referred to.

The middle years of the century – some time round about the year 150 B.C. – saw a step destined to have vast consequences. The old patrician magistrates had always possessed the legal right to consult the will of Heaven concerning public business and they had always had the still more important right to hold up public business while they did it. Taking the auspices in one form or another – the technicalities were many and complicated – had long been recognized in Rome as an invaluable aid to the commander in the field or the magistrate at home. The twenty sacrifices which Paulus made before the battle of Pydna were a far better expedient for delaying action than either telling the legions the truth or telling them nothing at all. The power of stopping action had seemed a far more useful power than even the power to act. In Roman experience ‘when in doubt, do nothing’ was the safest maxim to follow. Far more damage had been suffered by Rome through sins of commission than by sins of omission. It was only carrying this principle a little further when some twelve or fifteen years after the battle of Pydna, the tribunes for the first time received, by the Ælian-Fufian laws, the right to declare religious objections to the action of the ordinary magistrates. This might have mattered less had not the ordinary magistrates also received the right to declare religious objections to the action of the tribunes. Hence, a situation was created in which all the elected officers of the government could legally stop one another’s actions. This guaranteed that there would be no unnecessary interference with existing institutions. It legally secured that control of the tribuneship which had been the hope and dream of the patricians ever since its first institution.

In furthering this measure, the senate was certainly not inspired by a hatred of justice or a desire to injure anybody. In these middle years of the century, the senate could safely have boasted that it had made every effort to avoid assuming the government of foreign peoples: it had avoided the annexation of Macedonia as deliberately as it had withdrawn its garrisons from Greece: it had endeavoured to prevent the misdeeds of a certain section of its own members: it had warned the Greek cities to pay no attention to Roman officers who were not armed with an express mandate from itself: it sent out the

best men it could choose on foreign business of state – some of whom interpreted the wishes of the senate as nobly as Titus Quintius Flaminius had done in past years. No bitter or hostile spirit marked the senate as a whole or was expressed in its policy.

But the senate was forced, by a series of steps of which it was hardly aware, into positions it had not quite contemplated. Almost immediately after the passage of the *Ælian-Fufian* laws the series of scandals in which officers and magistrates of Rome had been concerned caused the passage of a law, the *Lex Calpurnia*, which made permanent the machinery of enquiry into such cases. This formed the starting point for vast changes. With the legal means of bringing oppressive governors to book which was provided by the Calpurnian laws, the senate was both able to undertake responsibilities from which hitherto it had shrunk and also felt less unwilling to accept them.¹ It had, or thought it had, a ready control over its instruments.

We must fix these two laws in our minds because they mark the moment of transition to a new era.

IX

Closely connected with all these hopes and fears and with the new legal facilities enjoyed by the senate were two steps which are usually thought of as discreditable to the Roman rule: the destruction of Carthage and Corinth. Although these dark episodes had different causes, both had the same secret, the importance which the senate attached to the preservation of the oligarchy, and the fear which it felt of any rival power.

Tradition attributed the destruction of Carthage to the influence of Cato the Censor. That redoubtable character had visited the African city on business of state, and was so amazed and concerned at the wealth, splendour and prosperity which shone before his keen grey eyes that he returned home firmly convinced that Rome was still in danger from the city of Hannibal. Few stories in Roman history are more famous than that of the tug which Cato is said to have attached thenceforward to every speech he made. Before resuming his

¹ 'The *Lex Calpurnia* of 149 B.C.,' by Professor W. S. Ferguson, *J. R. S.*, XI (1921), pp. 86–100.

seat, he never failed to work in the remark: 'I consider that Carthage ought to be destroyed.' Scipio Nasica started an opposition party by attaching to his own speeches a corresponding tag: 'I consider that Carthage ought not to be destroyed.' There is probably some truth in this legend. Cato made it his business in life to continue the tradition of his admired pattern, Quintus Fabius; and we need not doubt that among other things he continued the profound fear and suspicion of Carthage which old Fabius, to his dying day, had felt. But his hostility towards Carthage would have had little result had it not represented the feelings of a large part of the senatorial order.

Hannibal had warned his countrymen, long before, that commercial prosperity is only possible under the protection of political authority wielding military force. They had hated him too much to believe him. Now they discovered the truth of his words. The uneasiness of the senate over the wealth of Carthage may have been misplaced, and its growing conviction that such resources at any moment could be and might be transformed into military power may have been mistaken: we cannot tell: but they led the senate to anticipate the possibility it feared. Carthage then discovered that she was entirely in the hands of her enemies. A policy of turning the other cheek may be morally right and ultimately expedient: but it is not always immediately profitable in the commercial sense. Finding that the Carthaginians politely conceded every demand made upon them, the senate devised a catch to bring the process up short. A demand was presented that Carthage should be dismantled and rebuilt several miles inland. The Carthaginians, realizing that the site of their town was a great part of its prosperity, saw that they were trapped. They turned and fought – but too late.

The end of Phœnician Carthage was in keeping with its history. Even at every conceivable disadvantage the great old city defended herself for three years behind her tremendous fortifications. Not until Scipio Æmilianus, the son of the victor of Pydna, took over the command, was Carthage taken. With Scipio went his friend Polybius, the historian. Only the merest fragments of Polybius' narrative survives. Amid all the dimness and obscurity of the story, one perfect and dazzling glimpse

of actuality is allowed us. We see the red-faced, pot-bellied, over-dressed Hasdrubal, the Carthaginian general, crawling to the feet of young Scipio, and Scipio says: 'Here are the mighty fallen indeed! Is not this the valiant hero who despised our offers and rejected our terms and expressed his intention of perishing in the ruins of his native city? This is a lesson to us all, not to talk too much!' Then a pause, and some of the Carthaginian mercenary soldiers appear on the wall. They cry to the Romans to hold their hand for a moment: and the Romans, with the trade-unionism of soldiers, do so. Then the Carthaginians call out to Hasdrubal and shake their fists at him, and curse him, not with refined literary curses, but with the genuine vulgar heartfelt kind which any enraged modern soldiers might employ. Was he not the fellow who talked so big about all of them dying in the last ditch? What was he doing now? . . . Another pause. The soldiers move aside to give place to a more terrible figure—Hasdrubal's wife. . . . Now, Hasdrubal's wife is the only ancient Carthaginian woman of whom we have any kind of literary record or portrait. Most Carthaginian women, with their half-oriental tradition, dwelt out of sight of the foreign observer. She stalks upon the scene at this last moment, as if she were Carthage in person come to answer for herself. She is splendidly dressed and holds her two children by the hand. . . . Hasdrubal! No answer! . . . After thanking Scipio for his courtesy in guaranteeing their lives, she begins to speak to Hasdrubal and asks him how it happens that he, without a word to them, had crept secretly away to make his own surrender to the enemy, and how he dared to sit there now, after all he had said about seeking a funeral pyre in the flames of Carthage. . . . The fragment breaks off, and the narrative of Polybius, the eye-witness, ceases.

There was symbolism in this. The spirit of Carthage remained as strong and as courageous as ever: her servants were no less faithful: it was her leaders who betrayed her. Carthage was destroyed: the plough passed over her site: the rule of the world passed to better men.

X

A similar flaw in the leadership accounted for the fall of the Achæan League, the destruction of Corinth and the end of the independence of ancient Hellas: but in this case it was oversubtilization and over-sophistication. The Greek statesmen were attacked by an incapacity to see things simply and to see them whole. They thought themselves badly treated because the Romans had given their enemies and their friends an equal justice. When the patient senate sent diplomatic missions to explain the Roman policy and to talk to the discontented, the Greek statesmen thought that the senate was afraid. When the senate offered them generous terms of settlement, they thought there must be a trap. When the Achæan League attempted to compel Sparta to join their body, Rome took up the case. A collision between the Roman forces and the forces of the Achæan League resulted in the total overthrow of the latter. Corinth, the head city of the League, and incidentally one of the treasure-houses of old Hellenic civilization, was stormed and sacked. The Greeks in after years told some quaint anecdotes of the bucolic ignorance of L. Mummius, the Roman commander, and the coarse philistinism of his troops. The Roman soldiers were seen playing dice on the backs of pictures worth more than their weight in gold. When the consul was warned by a Greek of the value of some unique bit of loot, Mummius cautioned its custodians that if it were damaged they would have to replace it. . . . These gibes have stuck to the memory of a man who was soldier enough to defeat the men who gibed at him. No gibe could do justice to the stupidity and folly of the men whose mistakes ruined the Achæan League. The sack of Corinth was meant as a sharp lesson – and it was learnt.

A vast change now spread, in a few years' time, over the Mediterranean world. The old Carthaginian lands in Africa ceased to be an independent state, and became the Province of Africa, superintended by a Roman annual governor. The Macedonian republics, which had given trouble under a pretender to the crown, were turned into a similar Province of Macedonia. The Achæan League was dissolved and the component states became separate and several allies of Rome. By the creation of these provinces the action which the senate had

so long and so earnestly refused was at last consummated, and the Roman imperial dominion, as we afterwards know it, came into existence. Thirteen years were to pass before Spain was finally reduced and organized upon the same model. Four years more saw the lands which Rome had once taken from Antiochus organized as the Province of Asia. The change was not absolutely complete nor perfectly consistent. Separate states in various kinds of alliance with or subjection to Rome still maintained themselves. The senate had resisted rather than welcomed the spread of Roman government. The new empire had been forced into its unwilling hands.

They were unwilling, because the senate recognized the difficulties and the perhaps insoluble problems that beset the new era. No sooner was the empire created than these difficulties and problems, which hitherto had merely hovered in the background as potential threats, all came home to Rome and began to overshadow the life of the Roman people.

BOOK III
TRANSITION

CHAPTER XI

THE CAREER AND DEATH OF TIBERIUS SEMPRONIUS
GRACCHUS

(133 B.C. — 124 B.C.)

I

All the thoughts and feelings which we have just been surveying ruled for some sixty years the world in which the Roman dwelt. Their spell depended upon the fact that they were unquestioned; and that they were unquestioned depended upon the persistence of the old Roman traditional method of education. Men still gained their mental equipment from the instruction of their parents or their predecessors: ideas were still handed down as if they were sacred principles. But by degrees the new Greek educational methods taught a certain number of Romans to think for themselves. Then a man arose who questioned the accepted gospel of the age: the bubble burst, the spell was dissolved, and Rome was plunged into the rapids of change, revolution and civil war.

Among the candidates who stood for the tribuneship in the year 134 B.C., was a young man named Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus. He came of a distinguished plebeian family remarkable for its genial liberalism. His grandfather had been the famous consul and military commander in the Hannibalic war, who had led the slave-legions with such marked success. His father had been a soldier, a statesman and a diplomatist who had shared the type of reputation which Titus Quintius Flaminius enjoyed. Good feeling, good temper and kindly humanity had been the note of the whole family. The young Tiberius grew up in the new world of which Publius Scipio

Africanus, the victor of Zama, had been the grand exponent: a high and proud aristocracy which applied its vast wealth and immense power to the cultivation of the humane arts. He was indeed a grandson of the great Scipio through his mother, Scipio's daughter. Both by the influence of the Hellenic culture and the Hellenic education which distinguished the Scipionic circle and by some touch of inherited temperament, Tiberius was an individualist, who did not readily submit to the blind dictatorship of public opinion. He formed his own opinions. He stood – and his contemporaries were quite acute enough to discern it – at those cross-roads when a man has lost some of the social discipline which makes a good aristocrat, and has not taken the next step into the pure individualism of monarchy: he had all the belief in argument which springs from a complete faith in one's own powers of using it: and he had all the liberalism which is given by a supreme confidence that the barrier of class can safely be ignored, when it has been replaced by the barrier of race.

Tiberius was recognized from the first as one of the finest products of the new era. His seriousness, his high character, his charming manners and great intelligence seemed to mark him out as destined to a great future. He was elected to the augural college when quite a youth: and it was at one of the augural dinners that he was engaged in conversation by no less a person than the head of the Claudian house – Appius Claudius himself. What the great man wished to ask the young one was – would he give them the pleasure of becoming a Claudian son-in-law? Tiberius blushing and gracefully consented. Appius could hardly keep his secret until he reached home. Bursting in, he called out to his wife: 'Antistia! I have found a husband for our daughter!' Husbands for Claudian daughters were probably not rare, nor surprising: so Antistia merely answered: 'Why so much fuss? – unless indeed it is Tiberius Gracchus?' And it was!

This was the world, the atmosphere in which Tiberius Gracchus lived: the very centre of Roman aristocracy at its best. All that was available to instruct and educate the mind and character, he had. He was always recognized as being not indeed the greatest man but perhaps the most perfect and the most completely educated man that republican Rome ever produced.

THIRD CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(THE PERIOD OF CIVIL STRIFE)

<i>Comparative Scale</i>		B.C.	
		138	BIRTH OF SULLA
		137	Tiberius Gracchus at Numantia
		133	Death of Tiberius Gracchus
1850	← 130		135 Slave War 131 in Sicily
		129	Scipio Æmilianus murdered
		124	CAREER OF GAIUS GRACCHUS
1860	← 120	121	Year of the Opimian Wine
		119	Marius tribune
		118	Death of Micipsa
		115	Marius prætor
		113	Trial of the Vestals. FIRST NEWS OF THE CIMBRI
1870	← 110		112 JUGURTHINE WAR
		107	Military Reforms of Marius. COHORT SYSTEM
			CAREER OF GAIUS MARIUS
1880	← 100	100	Death of Saturninus and Glaucia
		95	Gaius Norbanus tried for his action against Cæpio
		91	TRIBUNESHIP OF M. LIVIUS DRUSUS
1890	← 90	91	SOCIAL WAR
		88	First Consulship of Sulla
			CAREER OF SULLA
1900	← 80	87	Siege of Athens
		84	Sulla in Asia
		83	Sulla lands in Italy
		81	SULLA DICTATOR
		80	Second Consulship of Sulla
		78	Death of Sulla
		74	LUCULLUS IN ASIA
		73	Insurrection of Spartacus
1910	← 70		Consulship of { POMPEIUS } SULLA'S CONSTITUTION ABOLISHED
		68	Cæsar quaestor
		67	Lex Gæbinia { FIRST EXTRAORDINARY COMMISSION TO POMPEIUS
		65	Cæsar ædile
		63	Conspiracy of Catiline. Consulship of CICERO
		62	Cæsar prætor
1920	← 60		TRIUMVIRATE OF POMPEIUS, CRASSUS AND CÆSAR
		59	Consulship of Cæsar
		58	Cæsar in Gaul. Legislation of Clodius
			CÆSAR'S CONQUEST OF GAUL { Death of Clodius
1930	← 50	52	POMPEIUS SOLE CONSUL { Revolt of Vercingetorix

II

The early years of Tiberius have no historical importance: but they throw much light upon his character. His military service was in Africa and Spain. He was present at the last siege of Carthage, and was reputed to be the man who first mounted the wall when Megara was attacked. Apparently he left Africa—he may have been invalided home—before the capture of the city. Nine years later, he served as quæstor to the consul G. Hostilius Mancinus in Spain. Mancinus met with historic disaster outside Numantia, and the quæstor, a young man of twenty-three, had to take over the task of saving the Roman army. The Spaniards remembered his father, and now they showed gratitude to the son. Tiberius was successful in obtaining terms which saved twenty thousand Roman troops, besides the camp followers and servants. After the retreat had been effected, he found that he had left his account-books behind. Realizing the possible consequences, he hurried back with a few friends to Numantia. The Numantines invited him into the city. After a little hesitation he took his life in his hands, and entered. All went off well. The Numantines, delighted at his confidence in their good faith, offered him hospitality, returned him his books, and were almost embarrassing in their friendly kindness. He rode away again, we need not doubt, with deep thoughts concerning the advantage of possessing a father who could evoke such generosity and warmth among his enemies. Evidently this habit of considering other people brought valuable results in its train.

He found something else too, when he arrived home. The senate was by no means eager to endorse the terms he had negotiated. Roman armies were expected to conquer or die; and the authorities had little sympathy with treaties designed to save from death armies which had failed to conquer. The citizen electors, however, took a different view. Tiberius was waited upon by crowds of grateful relatives and friends of the troops, and the Assembly refused to tear up the agreement. As far as Tiberius and the other officers and the rank were concerned, the Assembly insisted upon standing by them. Only the unfortunate consul was put in irons and returned to the Spaniards to bear the responsibility.

The agreement might have been ratified and as a consequence even the consul might have been saved (so it was thought at the time) if Scipio Æmilianus, the conqueror of Carthage, had been disposed to exert his powerful influence. But to ratify the treaty would have been tantamount to making peace in Spain, and Scipio Æmilianus wanted the Spanish command. Hence he did nothing to support the agreement; the war remained on foot, and two years later Scipio received the Spanish command which he wanted, and the mission of finishing the war. The episode produced a lasting coolness between Scipio and Tiberius Gracchus.

Most men are human: and the many virtues of Tiberius Gracchus did not prevent him from sharing some of the minor peculiarities which are common to mankind. The senate had been unfriendly. Had it not been checked by the warm gratitude of the people, it would have handed him, as well as the consul, and all the army, back into the hands of the Numanines, and Tiberius would have been condemned, at the best, to a life of frustration among a barbarous people. That the senate could justify itself by past precedent was true, and probably Tiberius recognized it. But, things being as they were, it was impossible that Tiberius should not feel his liberal principles strengthened by the addition of a friendly regard for the humble people whose collective strength had come to his rescue: and a desire to make them some return may have led him faster and farther than he would otherwise have gone.

Some experience he already had had. He had seen the army in Spain, and had realized that something was fundamentally wrong with it. It was not the conquering Roman army of old time. Travelling by the land route to Spain through Etruria, he had noticed with concern some of the features there visible: the absence of free cultivators and pastoralists, the universal employment of foreign slaves. The people of Rome continued his education. An agitation was already on foot in the back streets and the poorer quarters of the city. That propagandist whose efforts are still formidable even to this day—the unseen hand which writes inscriptions on walls and on pavements—was at work in Rome. Tiberius noticed the inscriptions. Discontent and seething rebellion were there; only a leader was wanting.

Finally he talked to men very different from the persons who wrote inscriptions by night: his father-in-law, Appius Claudius, and his elderly friends, P. Licinius Crassus, and P. Mucius Scævola the lawyer. From these he heard much more definite information than the inscriptionists could have given him. From Scævola, in particular, it is very probable that he gained the sure guidance through the intricacies of the land laws which he must certainly have derived from some quarter, for Tiberius, although a young man, showed an unerring knowledge of the legal aspects of his theme when he began his political career. From these experienced and learned authorities he could gather exact information concerning the earlier agricultural system of Italy, the devastation wrought by Hannibal, the diminution of the citizen body, the steps taken after the war to get land re-occupied and re-cultivated, the system of slave-cultivation, the eastern slave trade, the decline of the small free cultivator. This was the explanation of the state of things he saw in Etruria. The land had to a dangerous extent passed out of the hands of the race of peasants who had won Rome's battles, and now belonged to landlords who farmed huge estates with cheap slave labour.

They could have told him, too, that this state of affairs had been a matter of concern to the Scipionic circle in past years. G. Lælius had had a scheme for taking up the problem. When he came face to face with the difficulties, however, and realized the nature of the opposition he would have to encounter, he had hastily retired from the contest. This opposition was, of course, constituted by the vested interests which had been created in the new land system. Dared Tiberius Gracchus face what Gaius Lælius had feared to touch?

III

Scipio Æmilianus went to Spain. The son of Æmilius Paulus always had more of the narrow severity of his real father than of the large-mindedness of his adopted family the Scipios. He started to knock the imperfect citizen soldier into shape with the lash – a method that never appealed to the tastes of the Gracchi. In the meantime something else happened which deeply underlined the significance of the social changes in Italy. This was the great Sicilian slave revolt, the sensational story of which

comes down to us in the fragmentary pages of Diodorus Siculus. And as the narrative of Diodorus introduces us to a number of startling personages and strange and surprising adventures, which illuminate the history of Tiberius and Gaius, we may profitably turn aside to study them.

To begin with, we must note that the story told by Diodorus diverges in many important respects from the modern classic, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Instead of introducing us to a white-haired evangelical old gentleman of colour, with a fondness for hymns, Diodorus leads us into the company of as rough a set of blackguards as ever deserved the name of white men – the slave-shepherds of Sicily, with their wolfskin and bearskin garments, their clubs, lances, and long staves, and their huge mastiffs: a set of men who tended the flocks of the Sicilian uplands and had not the slightest objection to increasing their humble gains by robbing and – if necessary – even murdering the innocent traveller. Far from being half-starved persons they were (if Diodorus correctly describes them) well-fed beasts in the habit of swilling down milk, and gorging upon mutton and other foods. A great change had evidently happened in Sicily since the pastorals of Theocritus. If the slave shepherds ever dallied with Chloe in the shade, they not improbably pulled her hair in an unkind manner.

Diodorus next introduces us to the Sicilian plantations: to the slave-trade, dumping its crowds of captives into the markets whence they were dispersed to their various purchasers, branded like beasts and worked under the lash on short commons. As they were not adequately fed, robbery and disorder were widespread. The Roman governors, however, were not legally entitled to punish the slave criminals. A slave was not a responsible person in the eye of the law: it was his owner who must be brought to book for the slave's misconduct. Many of the owners were influential Romans whom the governor hesitated to offend: the troubles continued, and the slaves, unprotected by law of god or man, overdriven, ill-treated and underfed, waited only the time and the opportunity to revolt.

The plantation slaves of Sicily were most of them easterners, and members of intellectual races like the Greek and fighting races like the Cilician. Discussion, combination and co-operation were as natural to them as breathing. Unlike the negro

slave, who never possessed very much organization beyond his family and tribe, these Sicilian slaves were thoroughly accustomed to political methods and found no difficulty in employing them. Diodorus sketches for us one slave who by his ability and address had won for himself an exceptional position, and used it to organize his fellows. This man was Eunus, a native of Apamea in Syria.

The type of Eunus has not died out of the world: he was a natural sharper and swindler, with the skill of a first-class juggler and the ready patter of a Cheap Jack. He was a man who would never want a meal while a fellow creature had a pocket to be picked. In ordinary circumstances, Eunus would scarcely have been heard of outside the market-places and side-streets where he plied his vocation. Driven by necessity, he proved himself possessed of a kind of genius. Even in the very midst of the crowd of brutes and scoundrels who composed the slave-owners of Sicily, Eunus fooled them all to the top of their bent. He told fortunes, gave advice, and had a great success as a tipster of future events. He claimed divine inspiration: he could breathe fire and fall into prophetic trances – manifestations which had the same convincing effect upon his audience that automatic writing and mediumistic controls have exercised upon a later generation. He concealed his person and his work by the daring expedient of parading them openly. His master used to take him out to dinner with him, and Eunus proved an excellent entertainer. He reported, amid the laughter of his master and friends, the prediction of his divinity, that he should rule as a king. Asked to tell the company what he would do as king, Eunus delighted them by telling them the truth. They thought it capital fooling. Some of them sent him food from their own tables, with the request to remember them when he came into his kingdom. He did. There were men who owed their lives afterwards to little acts of thoughtless kindness at these parties.

Diodorus gives us another 'close-up,' before starting on his story: and this time it is a grand equipage that passes before us, drawn by splendid horses and guarded by armed servants – the carriage that contains the rich, ignorant, uneducated slave-owner Darnophilus: a brutal vulgarian, a cruel and ruthless driver of his men – with his sadistic wife Megallis, who loved to

torture her slave-women: and their daughter, who by kindness tried to make some amends to the unfortunate. Their house was gorgeous with silver plate, Persian weavings, and all the splendour of material luxury – a royal pomp and magnificence squeezed from the sweat and tears of their slaves. It was on the estate of this man that the first outbreak occurred. The slaves of Damophilus consulted Eunus. Would the divine powers give them success? Eunus answered, Yes, if they were quick about it. That night the town of Enna was seized by armed revolt. The slaves had something of their own to get back, and no atrocity was omitted that would give some expression to the enraged hatred they felt for their oppressors.

Damophilus and Megallis his wife were caught alive, and were brought into the city with every circumstance of ignominy, their hands tied behind their backs. The theatre was crowded when Damophilus, according to the Greek custom, was put on trial before the assembled people. He was given a fair hearing. He must have been a bold and able man in his way, for his defence so impressed an audience which was intensely hostile to him, that they wavered, and the issue seemed to be in doubt, until two of the leaders of the slaves, feeling that mercy was too dangerous a luxury for them to afford, broke into the proceedings, and slew him with their own hands. Megallis was turned over to her own women, who made no fuss about justice or mercy. After inflicting upon her some of the tortures with which she had favoured them, they threw her over a cliff. The daughter, who had been kind to them, was conducted to safety and set free.

As soon as the success of the revolt was clear, Eunus was elected leader, with the title of king, and the powers of 'Strategos Autocrator' familiar to the Greeks. He placed the crown upon his own head, associated his wife as queen, and appointed a regular council to advise him. The slave-owners were put to death: the revolt was organized, and the forces of the Roman government were defeated in the field. A military force reckoned at some ten thousand men was available to King Eunus of Enna. A second rising elsewhere in Sicily was united with that of Eunus, and its leader joined his council. For the time, the Greek travelling Cheap Jack was master of most of the island.

IV

The revolt of Sicily was too big a thing to be hidden. Before long, there was trouble in Rome, where an underground organization of slaves was discovered. Similar organizations were detected in Attica, and at Delos. Although these were repressed, the whole problem had become alarming and troubling. A young statesman such as Tiberius Gracchus could only view the state of affairs with disgust and detestation. It combined all the features of unnecessary barbarism and superfluous social unrest which ought to have been altogether avoided by a wise policy in the central control of the state. How did these men like Damophilus come to be so powerful and important? Why should they continue to be so? Roman aristocrats usually disliked to see too blatant pretensions among upstarts and petty tyrants. To spare the humble and war down the proud had always appealed to their taste. And in this case the proud were involving the Roman dominion in anarchy and ruin: for the revolt in Sicily was only one form of a trouble which everywhere was now endangering the stability of society.

But what was the cure? A reversal of the whole system which had prevailed for a couple of generations past was the only remedy: too much heed had been given to the interests of the rich: a broader basis for the state was wanted, a wider distribution of property, the re-establishment of a vigorous class of peasant farmers, the protection of the small man. Italy was a far richer land now than formerly: but the increased production was being used to support vast households of foreign slaves instead of Italian freemen. The economic system which had produced the conquered Greek and Carthaginian had spread into Italy at the expense of the system which had produced their conquerors.

The new system, however, had had its periods of usefulness, and it was now so strongly entrenched, and was so powerful a vested interest, that to attack it needed circumspection. The fate of the attempt which G. Lælius had made showed how little there was to hope for from the senate. Not only were the threatened interests represented in the senate by a serried array of members, but even if these could be ignored the prevailing opinion among the best members of the senatorial order

was all in favour of preserving the order at any cost. This implied the careful avoidance of any serious dissension in its ranks. If a challenge were to be made to the conventional doctrine and the established power, it could come only through an appeal to the final and supreme authority – the People.

The People meant the Ward Assembly: and to act through the Ward Assembly meant the mediation of a tribune: and a tribune implied a plebeian. This ruled out Appius Claudius, who, as a patrician, was disqualified: and as P. Mucius Scævola and P. Crassus were already candidates for the consulship, Tiberius was plainly indicated for the task. Tiberius Gracchus was elected to the tribuneship in the year 134 B.C. – the same year in which Publius Mucius Scævola was elected consul, Scipio Æmilianus took over the command in Spain, and King Eunus set up his slave-realm at Enna in Sicily.

V

The legislation which Tiberius Gracchus immediately brought before the Assembly gave the Roman governing classes the first serious jar which they had received since the first consulship of Publius Scipio Africanus. It was drafted with a skill which betrayed a far more experienced hand than that of a young man not yet thirty years of age: and it proved a weapon which exactly penetrated the chink in the enemy's armour. It was based upon the fact that, by earlier legislation, which had never been repealed, no man was entitled to hold more than a certain amount (five hundred *jugera*) of Roman state-land. In order to prevent the land from being neglected after the Hannibalic war, this limitation had been tacitly ignored. Tiberius now proposed to the legislative Assembly that this old limitation should be re-enacted, the present holders compensated, and that the surplus land which by this means was released to the state should be utilized to endow a fresh class of small farmer chosen from the landless citizens of Rome. The total amount of land involved was considerable: it was in any case quite large enough for the purpose in view.

It was not all at once, probably, that the holders of state

land realized the extraordinary simplicity and ingenuity of the case which Tiberius Gracchus was handling against them: but they soon learnt it. Their first answer was that this was confiscation and spoliation; but then, the new proposal was offering them compensation for possessions to which, strictly speaking, they had no legal right; and it was extremely difficult to make the citizen electors look upon this as spoliation. They then said that Tiberius was proposing a general dividing-up of property: but as the limitation was old statute law, the argument was equivalent to contending that a general division of property had long been on the statute book: which no one was likely to believe. It was in fact impossible to contend that a limitation which had already been the law of Rome was in itself unjust or unreasonable. The utmost that could be successfully maintained against it was that it was no longer desirable or expedient – and this meant that the whole case had to be argued upon the question of what was desirable and expedient at the moment. On this theme, Tiberius had everything his own way. His arguments made a deep and permanent impression upon public opinion in Rome. Some of them became part of the proverbial philosophy of the Roman people, and have indirectly descended to us.

‘The wild beasts,’ he said, ‘have their dens, but the man who sacrifices his life for his country has nothing but the air and the sunshine to call his own.’¹ He smiled at the conventional phrase of the Roman military commanders, exhorting their men to fight for hearth and home. They had no homes, and therefore no hearths. What they died for was to defend the luxury and wealth of rich men. They were masters of the world – a world in which they had not a foot of ground of their own. . . . These ironies struck deep and abiding root in the Roman mind. They were never forgotten. On those who heard them they had the effect which great oratory can sometimes produce: they did not so much convince, as touch men with a kind of miraculous change of heart.

So obvious was it that Tiberius would carry his bill into law, that some method of preventing it became urgent to his

¹ This has come down to us from another source as: ‘Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head,’ and ‘The sun shines upon the just and the unjust.’

opponents. The obvious and ready method was the veto of another tribune. The man who consented to act was Gaius Octavius. His veto blocked the reading of the bill.

VI

Tiberius Gracchus submitted to the veto of his colleague, and withdrew his bill. At the same time he introduced a new bill drafted in a different manner. This new bill enacted that all land which was held by individuals in contravention of the provisions of law should be at once returned to the owner. No provision was made for the compensation of the dispossessed. The earlier bill had done its work as an educative force. This second bill was intended to be one which could only be vetoed by playing direct into the hands of Tiberius. When Octavius vetoed the introduction of the new bill, before the Ward Assembly, it was possible for Tiberius to maintain that his colleague was opposing the enforcement of obedience to the law: and the opposition to the bill was labelled with motives of selfishness, self-will, violence and brutality from which it never again got free. Tiberius convicted both of his leading opponents, Scipio Nasica among the senators and Gaius Octavius among the tribunes, of being substantially interested in the result. His offer, though a poor man, to buy out the interest of Octavius, proved in addition that the action of Octavius was not due merely to his fear of monetary loss, but was a hatred of the principle of the bill. Octavius, although defeated in argument, held his ground: for he could not be prevented from using the legal powers that were in his hands, howsoever much his moral position might be discredited. The next stage in the contest was when Tiberius, obliged to recognize this central fact, turned from argument, in which he had been completely victorious, to the use of the same legal weapons which were being employed against him.

He was a tribune, and the awful, though negative powers of a tribune were his. He solemnly 'proclaimed' the whole business of state, as long as the veto blocked his land bill. The magistrates were paralysed; the treasury was sealed: the courts closed. The opposition promptly went into mourning as a sign of protest; and Tiberius, on his part, declaring that there was a plot to murder him, took to carrying a sword-stick in public.

The Assembly was then convened, in spite of the veto that was placed upon its proceedings.

Before the voting could begin, the opposition raided the ballot-boxes and carried them off. As soon as the reformers could collect their forces, they prepared to get the ballot-boxes back, and a free fight was in prospect when two respected senators threw themselves between the contending parties and implored Tiberius to pause before he took any irrevocable step. Tiberius accordingly paused, and asked the two peacemakers what they proposed that he should do. They disclaimed any right or any power to advise him, but implored him to leave the decision to the senate. Tiberius consented to do so.

The senate itself however, failed this time to reach a decision. The parties were sufficiently balanced to produce a deadlock. Quite certainly Scipio Nasica could not carry a majority against Appius Claudius and the friends of Tiberius Gracchus. It was unfortunate that Appius and his colleagues could not obtain a majority either. The mere fact that the senate was divided in opinion and could not make up its mind is a sure proof that the party of Damophilus, the party of blank reaction and selfishness, was a small one. It was probably strengthened by those who sincerely doubted the wisdom of seeming to make concessions to confiscatory schemes in the midst of a time of armed revolution and widespread conspiracy. When at last the senate admitted its inability to decide, the responsibility was thrown again upon Tiberius.

In the stress and hurry of the moment it was only imperfectly realized that this implied that Rome despaired of her ancient arts of discussion and compromise, and resorted in this crisis to the solution which she had most emphatically rejected in the past: the single undivided will of a man. But no great leader appeared in the senate to bring the *patres* back to the discussion, and to keep them at it until they reached some conclusion. The situation, at this critical moment, slipped out of the hands of the senate; and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the senate never recovered control.

Tiberius might have copied those patterns of the ancient time when controversies such as this were spun out for ten or twenty years, until an amicable result was reached. But there were objections to this course. He was not a member of a

group or association, the members of which could follow one another year after year with unbroken continuity of policy; he was one man, whose year of office, once expired, could not be repeated for many years to come; and, now that he was known to his enemies, in all probability never again. The electors he led were not the old Roman plebs but the new kind which had grown up since the Hannibalic wars, and finally, time pressed. If he waited twenty years he might save himself the trouble of dealing with the matter at all. Damophilus and King Eunus would reign even in Rome itself.

VII

The solution of the deadlock which Tiberius devised was the plan which we commonly know as the 'Recall.' He laid before the Assembly a scheme by which, when there was a hopeless deadlock between two tribunes, the Assembly should have the power to countermand its election of one of them and remove him from the bench of tribunes.

Outlines at least of the speeches in which he introduced and defended this measure still survive. They show that he put forward political doctrines which must have given many of the senators pause. In bringing the bill before the Assembly, for example, he expressed the belief that if two men of equal authority, associated in a collegiate magistracy, differ, it is hard to see how the difference can be resolved without a civil war. But in suggesting such ideas, he was going clean against the ancient tradition of Roman public life. There must have been many senators who were startled at his words, and who mentally answered that when two magistrates of equal authority differed, there was, of course, no question of civil war – what happened was that they cancelled out and the result was nil. Tiberius suggested that when two magistrates differed, one must have his way. No such doctrine was known to the Roman tradition. The Roman republican state had instituted collegiate authorities – two consuls, two tribunes, two censors – with the very intention that in cases of doubt one could stop and prohibit the other's action. The tribunes and prætors had been increased in number, but still with the intention that, in cases of doubt, one could prohibit the action of the others. Far from the resulting deadlock being accidental it was, from the first,

intended. The principle was: 'When in doubt, do nothing'; and the force of the principle lay in that it made sure of complex agreement before action was taken.

Just this very principle was the doctrine which Tiberius questioned and denied. Something new in him, something unlike the old-fashioned Roman, something imperious and commanding, bade him to dislike being in doubt and to hate doing nothing. When (according to his new doctrine) two equal magistrates differed, they did not both sit down with apologies. No! One must give way. That is—one must have the full right to put his policy into action. Who was to be the judge between them? The Assembly! . . . And this was the 'Recall.'

Once it was started, the question of the Recall became even more important than the question of the State Lands. The power was hitherto unheard of. There was such a thing as unseating a magistrate because his title was invalid; but if he had a valid title the idea of revoking his authority was impossible and struck at the root of discipline. And another question arose: Who gave the Assembly this unheard of power? Did it merely assume it? If so, the Assembly could assume any powers it liked. This also was a disturbing thought. Finally, the tribuneship had always been a rather alarming and revolutionary authority. If the Assembly could give itself any powers it liked, and could at its will give a tribune the right to ignore his colleagues, then it was legally entitled to appoint a monarch. In what way would Tiberius Gracchus differ from a monarch if the Assembly gave him the right to override all his colleagues?

Far from these being the mere wild fancies of angry reactionaries, they were very serious thoughts, and time and trial were to prove them alarmingly true. If the new peasantry was to be created by such means the senate must pause a moment and reflect.

VIII

The senate paused and reflected; and got no further. By an insidious chain of premiss and deduction, the subject had been changed from the comparatively mild question of an increase of the free peasantry to the crucial problem of the constitutional powers of the Assembly. It was all very well for Tiberius to

talk of the danger of civil war between magistrates. That was an invention of his own, entirely unsupported by any experience from past history. No one – not even Damophilus – was going to get up a civil war over the tenure of the State Lands. But the constitutional powers of the Ward Assembly were exactly the problem over which civil war might really be possible.

The bill was read, the resolution passed; and the Assembly, by a decisive vote, bestowed upon itself the right to revoke the authority of a tribune.¹ Octavius was deposed and removed. The main bill, the Land Bill, was then introduced and passed. There never had been any doubt that if it could be voted on, it would be passed; and all that Tiberius had upon his conscience was the removal of a man who simply refused to allow the people to vote. He had no worries over that. To get things done was his aim. The commission for carrying out the new law was constituted. It consisted of Tiberius Gracchus, his brother Gaius, and Appius Claudius; a trio who could hardly be described as proletarian. They set to work without delay.

But the method by which the deadlock had been broken and the enactment passed had sent over to the opposition a number of neutrals and friends. Even the electors of the Assembly were influenced by the arguments against the 'Recall.' The composition of the commission gave rise to further searchings of heart among senators. The members were given judicial powers in order to enable them to carry out their duties. Hence, Tiberius, the head of the commission, now combined in his own person the tribuneship and the *imperium* as well as judicial power as a member of the commission; and he was apparently to be assisted by a packed commission made up of his own brother and father-in-law. The Claudians had always been eccentrics, and Appius was not likely to be much of a restraint. The trend among the senators became more and more distinctly hostile to Tiberius. They refused to vote the sums necessary to finance the commission.

The first bill, which had been withdrawn owing to the opposition of Octavius, had provided for the compensation of

¹ Botsford defends the legality and constitutionality of the measure (*Roman Assemblies*, pp. 367–368). The view we take depends upon whether we consider it more important to ensure action or to ensure agreement. See also Greenidge, *History of Rome*, pp. 132–133, where the case for Tiberius is stated.

the dispossessed holders of State Land. The source from which the necessary funds were to be derived was not perfectly clear; and had the proviso been contained in the law as finally enacted, the whole scheme would have suffered shipwreck on the refusal of the senate to vote the money. But that bill had been withdrawn, and the second one, which had passed into law, made no provision for compensation, and therefore the commission was saved from the necessity of finding the money. Another fortunate coincidence befel when Eudemus, the executor of King Attalus of Pergamus, arrived in Rome with the king's will, under which he made the Roman People his heirs. Tiberius seized the opportunity, and by a resolution of the Assembly this money was devoted to providing the new land-holders with capital for their ventures. Tiberius also let it be known that he intended to provide for the future of the Pergamene kingdom. This made matters much worse between Tiberius and the senate. Among the senate's particular privileges had been control of the state exchequer and the provincial administration: but now, apparently, not content with procuring the recall of a tribune and combining in himself the tribunician, magisterial and judicial powers, Tiberius was to give himself, through the Assembly, the right to dispose of the finances and government of the state. One senator, who lived next door to Tiberius, rose in the senate to assure his colleagues, with irony, that he had reason to believe that Eudemus had presented Tiberius also with a crown and a purple robe, as he was so soon to be King of Rome! It is possible that not all the senators understood that this was intended as a sarcasm.

The opposition to the Land Bill plucked up courage. It seemed indeed to the advisers of Tiberius that even his personal safety now demanded the protection of office, and that the wisest plan would be for him to hold the tribuneship again in the following year. A programme of legislation was drawn up, likely to attract the votes of the Assembly. With the decline of the numbers of citizens on the census roll, and the impoverishment of many, the property qualifications for army-service had been lowered, and the military liability had pressed more heavily upon the poorest. A scheme of reform was planned. Judicial reforms were foreshadowed which should remove some of the power and privileges of the senatorial order and vest them

in other hands. The legislation of the next thirty years was contained in this programme.

But the most controversial year of office that Rome had known for centuries was now nearing its end. Before the new programme could sink into the minds of the electors, Rome was plunged into the annual elections; and the problem of Tiberius was the centre of the struggle.

IX

Had Tiberius a right to present himself to the electors as a candidate for a second year of office? Even at the time men differed; and the point is still an arguable one. One fact was incontestable. The whole conception of these public offices under the Roman state was that they were annual; and if a man, presuming upon the exact letter of the law, secured election year after year, he might not be violating the words of any definite enactment, but he most certainly was violating the spirit of the constitution. It became quite obvious that Tiberius Gracchus did not feel especially bound by such restrictions. For sixty years Rome had hesitated, qualified, gone without reforms that were imperatively necessary, because they might endanger the constitution. In Tiberius a man had at last arisen who thought the reforms more important than the constitution and who was willing to override it to get them.

The first day's proceedings were so disorderly that the Assembly was adjourned. Protests were made that the candidature of Tiberius was illegal. On the second day, the disorder was scarcely less. Some of the tribunes agreed with the view that Tiberius was not a qualified candidate. In the midst of the argument, Fulvius Flaccus, a senator, arrived with the sensational news that in view of the refusal of the consul to act, the opposition intended to take the law into their own hands, and were collecting a gang of their own retainers with that object. Excitement was now keyed up to the highest pitch. A zealous amateur bodyguard was at once formed to protect Tiberius. The members of the audience who were furthest away could not understand what was on foot; and Tiberius, having no loud-speaker to assist him, resorted to dumb-show and tried to indicate by laying his hand on his head, that his life was in danger. But so high was the tension

by this time that some one interpreted this action as a demand for the crown, and rushed into the senate with news to this effect.

A historic scene then took place.

Scipio Nasica, addressing the consul, called upon him to save the state and repress an illegal assumption of power.

Publius Mucius Scævola replied that he would not use force against men who had not first used it; he would not cause any citizen to suffer without fair trial and legal sentence; but if any illegal act were done, he would ensure that it should be of no effect.

Scipio Nasica rose from his seat saying: 'Then since the consul neglects to ensure the safety of the state, let those who wish to defend the laws, follow me.'

Then for the first time in the history of Rome was seen the startling sight of an armed attack upon a political meeting. The amateur bodyguard of Tiberius, which had in all probability expected nothing more serious than a little pushing and sparring, was scattered to the winds by an onslaught of club-men who struck down everything they met. Tiberius himself ran with the rest. He was caught by the gown; but like the young man in the gospel, he left it in the pursuer's hand and fled away. But he stumbled over a prostrate figure and was himself clubbed - Publius Satureius, a tribune, was the man who struck him. Lucius Rufus struck the second blow. Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, with three hundred of his followers, died there - and not one of them by an iron weapon. The bodies were thrown into the Tiber.

X

The consuls possessed no armed force. They had no power to prevent the unofficial and illegal reign of terror which for some time raged in Rome. A number of the supporters of Tiberius Gracchus were exiled or executed. But it would have taken a much greater man than Scipio Nasica to interfere with Appius Claudius, and a far stronger force than he could raise to deal with the retainers of the Claudian house. A committee of investigation enquired into the circumstances of the riot. A few more persons of no importance were punished; but that was about the extent of the action taken. On the other hand the

Land Law and (still more important) the Commission which administered it, were preserved intact. Scipio Nasica had slain not the Land Bill and its author, but only the author of the 'Recall' and the constitutional innovation he introduced. He found himself a man who had shed the sacred blood of a tribune, and his crime, from his own point of view, had not even the excuse of success. Such names as 'Murderer !' and 'Tyrant !' were shouted after him as he walked in the street. The senate, in the interests of public peace, sent him abroad on business, and kept him there. He died without seeing Italy again.

The upshot of the whole affair was that Tiberius Gracchus had sacrificed his life; but he had passed his Land Bill in the teeth of all opposition; and it was safely and permanently enrolled among the laws of Rome. Short as was his career – packed into twelve months – it left an ineffaceable mark upon the history of Rome. It started a new era; it foreshadowed all the new policies and new principles that were destined to change the face of the world; it contained in germ the legislation of the great reformers of the next hundred years. Tiberius himself was never forgotten. He remained a model for future ages – a standard to which men aspired, although they could never hope to achieve it.

Little by little the forces of the government cut off the supplies of King Eunus, circumscribed his authority and destroyed his power. A year after the death of Tiberius, Enna was taken and Eunus died miserably in prison. His protest had been effective; he had frightened many people into reconsidering their ways. But from him and his slave-state no permanent good could come. If there were to be justice and order and security, they must come from Rome; and if they did not come from Rome they would come from nowhere. The story was not yet finished. Only a chapter had been turned.

CHAPTER XII

GAIUS GRACCHUS, THE POPULAR DICTATOR

(124 B.C. – 121 B.C.)

I

Scipio Æmilianus was still at Numantia when he heard of the death of Tiberius. He seems to have been fond of quoting Homer on great occasions: and all he said now was the forty-seventh line of the first book of the *Odyssey* – the remark of Athena that Aigisthos had got what he asked for. The quotation is illuminating. Aigisthos had aspired to the throne of Agamemnon, and had been slain by the legal successor. It is evident that to Scipio the Land Bill had been a trifle compared with the question of the constitutional usurpations involved in Tiberius' policy. It was for these that Tiberius had died: and Scipio Æmilianus thought that he had invited his fate.

Others did not think so. During the years immediately after the death of Tiberius there was time for thought; and the belief sank deep into the minds of many Romans that the constitutional innovations of Tiberius had been the only resource if necessary reforms were to be passed. The senate had contrived a deadlock, and then blamed those who broke it. One result of this belief was an earnest attempt to carry on some of the projects which Tiberius had left unfinished. Gaius Papirius Carbo brought forward a bill instituting vote by ballot in the Legislative Assembly and definitely legalising re-election to the tribuneship. By this time Scipio Æmilianus was home again, and added all the weights of his authority and prestige to the senatorial party. But times had changed. The prestige of the destroyer of Carthage and the victor of Numantia could no longer overawe the Assembly. He found this out in a famous scene, in which he tried to talk like his father, and found that it would not do. Carbo sprang upon him the test question:

'What do you think of the death of Tiberius Gracchus?'

Scipio Æmilianus answered: 'If he intended to seize the control of the state, he was legally slain.'

This essay in 'an and if' brought an outcry from the meeting.

Then Scipio spoke the words which, in his father's time, would have been thought the manly independence of an old-fashioned patrician, but now were taken as the insolence of an enemy of the people.

He said: 'I never feared the arms of the foreign foe,¹ so why should I disturb myself about you, who are not sons of Italy, but only her stepsons?'

There might be truth in the insinuation that the citizen electors who faced him were largely of non-Roman descent; but it was not wise to offend them. To an angry murmur he again answered: 'I see no reason to fear, now they are free, the men I once led in chains.'

The bill establishing vote by ballot was passed; but the right of re-election to the tribuneship was not legalised till some years later.

The complete breach which this and other events brought about between Scipio Æmilianus and the Assembly had serious importance because it meant the disappearance of the 'Centre Party,' the 'Moderates,' whom Scipio was well qualified to gather and lead, if he could have shown the tact necessary to leadership. The mysterious murder of Scipio two years later was never cleared up. The evidence collected by the enquiry into the circumstances of his death was not published; and although private suspicion attached to Carbo, he was never definitely accused of the crime. Just as the death of Tiberius Gracchus was the first case of political violence in ancient Rome, so the death of Scipio Æmilianus was the first case of political assassination. It set an ugly precedent for the future.

Since no centre party was formed, the field was left clear to the extremists, and there was a distinct reconcentration of opinion at the two opposite poles represented by the senate and the Assembly: the party of oligarchy and stability, and the party of democracy and action.

¹ Playing upon the meaning of 'hostis,' which implied a foreigner as well as a foeman.

II

In the meantime the commission charged with the execution of the Land Act had been hard at work. Land was inspected, titles were investigated. Titles were often a serious difficulty: some of them could not be proved in a perfectly satisfactory legal way; and certain of the proprietors were not Roman citizens but subjects of states technically separate and 'allied.' The complications set up by these difficulties needed careful adjustment. There were treaties to be considered, and special relationships that needed study. From the experience gained in these investigations Roman statesmen first began with difficulty to realize that the old system of 'alliances' by which Rome had built up her hegemony in Italy was now obsolete, and had ceased to correspond with the facts. The social structure of Italy had become uniform.

Since the appeals made to their treaties by the Italian allies formed a most awkward practical barrier in the path of the Land Commission, the leaders of the *populares* began to contemplate the desirability of some simple uniform system of citizenship throughout Italy. Negotiations were set on foot, and a scheme was drawn up by which the Italian allied cities were to be offered Roman citizenship providing that they surrendered, in return, any power in strict law which would enable them to defeat or to put obstacles in the way of the Land Act. M. Fulvius Flaccus was consul in 125 B.C. and undertook the task of seeing the necessary legislation carried. But the time was not yet ripe for such a measure; there were serious differences of opinion even in the ranks of the *populares*, so that Carbo left the party rather than consent to the revolutionary proposal. The senate made a special personal appeal to Flaccus, who at last dropped the bill and went no further with it. The wild revolt and severe punishment of the city of Fregellæ were the immediate results of the failure to proceed with the measure. More serious consequences were reserved for the future.

It became obvious that unless better leadership were found for the *populares*, and unless the gains which they had already won could be consolidated and made self-perpetuating, the successes of Tiberius Gracchus would be wasted. The man required was at hand. He was Tiberius Gracchus' younger brother Gaius.

Some of the changes that were coming over the Roman world were not changes of opinion or view, but actual changes in the substance and build of man. Gaius Gracchus embodied some of these changes in his own person. Not even Tiberius had gone so far in some directions. Gaius was at one and the same time a man who worked by and through political institutions and deliberative methods, and also an individualist parted by a vast gulf of temperament from men like old Fabius Maximus Cunctator. Gaius was a true Italian of the later type, as the world was to know it in ages to come – a fierce, explosive man of volcanic energy and overwhelming zeal, whose passionate nature carried him away sometimes with hurricane violence, but more often was concentrated in narrower compass, under strong control, to drive with irresistible force a human engine whose power for work, for thought and for speed was stupendous. He had sat at the feet of his brother Tiberius. He had realized with clear discernment the equipment necessary to him before he could come forward to carry on the work. He needed complete disregard of personal consequences, and he needed a power over words which would give him control of the crowd. The first he possessed; he was ready for a very short career – but he meant it to be a very full one. He meant to pack a few months or years with a life-time's work. The second he acquired by a long course of assiduous practice, as Demosthenes learnt the art. But the art which he acquired was a craftier and subtler art than that of Demosthenes – for it seemed not to be art at all. When at last he took the platform to address the citizens of Rome his words seemed those of a plain blunt man. His high character and perfect integrity, not even his foes questioned. This was lucky: for no man had to a greater degree the power of carrying an audience away.

And he meant to carry his hearers away. He did not come before them in order to evoke their own thoughts or develop their own ideals. He came sure of himself, convinced of the wisdom of his own policy, and with the firm intention of persuading the Roman to follow him. He did not teach: he led.

III

Gaius Gracchus had faced several problems from which Tiberius had turned. The elder Gracchus had never been quite

willing to look plainly at the prospect that a tribune, if he were to be a leader of the people, would—in practice, if not in theory—have to be sole tribune: and a sole tribune would be a monarch. But Gaius looked at it, and did not care. Words did not terrorize him. He knew too much about them. Even more than Tiberius, he cared only for results. Methods mattered little. Men had suffered too much for the sake of ideas and abstractions.

The year after Fulvius Flaccus had abandoned the Franchise Bill, Gaius came forward to stand for the tribuneship. He had already some experience of office. A successful term in Sardinia as quæstor to the consul Orestes had shown that he possessed administrative ability. The oligarchy, acutely on the watch, put every possible obstacle in the way of the new Gracchus. He avoided them all. They packed the electoral assembly with their own supporters: but the *populares* had anticipated this, and on the day of the election Rome was crowded with citizens from all parts of Italy who had made a special journey to Rome in order to be present and vote. The Campus Martius was so crowded, that the surrounding roofs and walls were invaded by ardent partisans. Gaius was fourth on the list of candidates returned. In importance, as Plutarch notes, he was very much the first. He dominated the bench of tribunes as if he had it to himself.

The apprehensions of the oligarchy were well founded. The first resolutions brought before the legislative Assembly by Gaius were sensational. Half the power of Gaius lay in that he did not merely put forward measures of which the people approved, but was himself a thrilling and novel entertainment. The Assembly was crowded to see him walking to and fro on the platform, like a lion in a cage, pulling his cloak off his shoulders in the absorbed excitement of speaking, his strong, splendid voice sometimes getting out of control—and the audience watching, rapt, open mouthed, till the critical moment when his servant sounded a note on the pitch-pipe to remind the orator—and Gaius came back to earth and self-consciousness. As an entertainment, it was magnificent. The substance matched it. Hardly even a fight to the death between gladiators or a driving match in the circus equalled in thrill the description Gaius drew for them, of the awful sanctity of the tribune's power and

person; how once war had been declared because of an insult to a tribune – and Gaius Veturius had been condemned to death . . . for what? For mere rudeness and discourtesy! – and then his savage and lurid picture of the enraged senators pursuing Tiberius Gracchus and . . . yes! . . . battering him to death, dragging his body through the city and casting it into the river – although so solemn and awful had been the precautions with which their ancestors surrounded the penalty of death, that when any one was accused of a crime capable of such a penalty, and was not in court to answer for it, a trumpeter used to be sent to stand outside his house and summon him by blast of trumpet . . . such care, caution and publicity in old times had been shown. . . . And, pacing lion-like to and fro, pulling at the ends of his cloak, and followed by his servant with the pitch-pipe, Gaius with savage vehemence and torrential energy underlined, emphasised, threw up into prominence and surrounded with fire the unforgettable and unforgotten episode when Tiberius had fallen . . . all to justify to the Assembly the two resolutions he was putting before them: one of which was, that any one whose office was revoked by the people should be incapable of holding office again (this for Octavius!) and the other, that the Assembly should consider the case of any magistrate who had subjected a citizen to penalty without a legal trial (this for Popilius Lænas and P. Rupilius the ex-consuls, who had condemned some of the followers of Tiberius by tribunals whose competence was questionable, and was without appeal). . . . There was another sensation when it was announced that Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, the daughter of the conqueror of Zama, had intervened to beg forgiveness for Octavius – and Gaius accordingly, with emotion, withdrew his bill. . . . All this was magnificent stuff: and as long as there was plenty of it, the Sovereign People's interest in politics showed no sign of abatement.

Popilius Lænas and P. Rupilius were not so fortunate as Octavius. Popilius hastened to leave Rome before he could be put on trial, and a large concourse of friends accompanied him to the city gate and took an elaborate and public farewell of one whom they regarded as a victim of revolutionaries. P. Rupilius stood his trial, and was condemned.

Behind the torrential energy of Gaius, a very clear mind was

at work. These two laws were a warning to the opposition to play no tricks.

IV

Gaius now tabled the programme of reform. It was worthy of his beginning. There was much more coherence and system about it than had been noticeable in the programme of Tiberius; and one way of describing it would be to call it a scheme for the Preservation of the Roman People. The actual legislative measures involved were fairly numerous, and to detail them all is neither possible nor necessary. Whatsoever their number, they fell into five main groups. There was a complete revision and re-enactment of the Land Law of Tiberius, taking into account the experience of the last few years. So revised, the work of Tiberius became permanent. In the second place, there was a series of enactments designed to assist a class of Roman citizens somewhat higher in the social scale than those for whom the legislation of Tiberius had been intended. A number of new cities were founded, or old cities were reorganized and repopulated; roads were built to facilitate intercommunication. It was this road-building scheme of Gaius which permanently impressed upon the Roman mind the conception which Appius Claudius had forecast nearly two centuries before – that upon the existence of adequate means of communication all effective government was based.¹ This scheme – a large one, involving much expenditure and much work – Gaius took a leading part in administering; and he showed a system, a decision, a rapidity which amazed his contemporaries, who had almost forgotten

¹ It will be simpler to state here, at once, the history of Roman road-making. Appius Claudius built the Via Appia to Campania during his censorship in 312 B.C. and following years, and after the reduction of Samnium and the Pyrrhic wars the road was continued to Brundisium. Next came the highway from Rome to Ariminum – the 'Via Flaminia,' called after Gaius Flaminius, censor in 219 B.C. When, some fifty years later, Cisalpine Gaul was pacified, the Via Æmilia was made from Ariminum to Placentia. These roads, with the Via Aurelia to Pisa, were the main arteries of communication. All of them represented old trackways of immemorial antiquity. The Roman engineers re-laid and 'made' the ancient roads, often in magnificent style, and from them branches were later on extended into the provinces. The work of Gaius Gracchus was to establish the principle that the branch and secondary roads should, in the public interest, receive their full share of development. The Via Latina, Via Cassia, Via Salaria and Via Valeria and others probably owed much to him. The final result was very much like that which followed the building of railways in modern times – a new era of intercommunication was begun.

what a great civil administrator looked like. The work brought him into direct personal contact with all kinds of men; and the tradition of his kindness and courtesy to all classes has survived. Those who had business with him found him in private life quite a different person from the formidable and passionate orator, and one with whom it was delightful to work. . . . In the third place, Gaius introduced the first Corn Dole for the benefit of the urban class a little lower than that which had been assisted by the legislation of Tiberius, or his own colonization scheme. Corn was purchased by the state and sold at a cheap rate. Great public granaries were built, and kept stocked, so that the corn-supply should be regulated and controlled. No means test was imposed. The fourth class of measures included a law by which the lot of the serving citizen soldier was made easier. His clothing was henceforward supplied by the state; and seventeen years of age was specified as the earliest age at which he might be called to join the legions. These four groups formed a sort of People's Charter, the foundation of a new era of happiness for the classes affected. They were not intended to be exhaustive, but to constitute the first steps towards improving the Roman citizen.

These four groups of legislative enactments would have more than sufficed to occupy most tribunes during their year of office; but they represented only a part of the work of Gaius. The fifth group of measures included some of the most difficult and important of all.

Gaius perfectly understood that his time was short. It was necessary for him to make some provision to secure the permanency of his work, so that it should not be repealed immediately after he had gone. The fifth class of measures were those meant to achieve this end. They were so important, and produced such enduring and widespread effects, that they deserve particular note.

What Gaius wanted was to enlist upon his side – or upon the side of his legislation – a strong body of Roman citizens who would possess an interest in preserving his work. He wished at the same time to effect a number of reforms in the administration of the state. His aims were various. He had a natural and spontaneous affection for the efficient and the business-like which made him care for good administration for its own sake ;

and perhaps this characteristic alone would be enough to stamp him as a man of the new era. He also foresaw the necessity of a great increase in the number of qualified magistrates, if the provinces were to be adequately governed. The existing oligarchy was far too small to be capable of dealing with its responsibilities. If the increase could be brought about without increasing the number of persons tied up with the social and political prejudices of the present senate – so much the better. The great device of Gaius was the invention of a simple expedient which would simultaneously achieve all these ends.

When King Attalus of Pergamus bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman people he unconsciously presented them with the opportunity of educating themselves in the principles of taxation. The gift having been made, it remained to be decided whether the senate or the Assembly should have the determining voice in settling the future of Attalus' kingdom. Under the guidance of Gaius, the Assembly successfully claimed the privilege. The tithes which formed the revenue were failing in amount because the Roman government possessed no body of trained tax-gatherers to collect them. They were paid in kind, and needed skilful handling.

The plan of Gaius was to let the collection of the taxes out to contract with Roman firms. The highest bidders paid down the stipulated sum, and collected the tithe; their profit depending upon the margin between the estimate on which they paid, and the real product of the tithe when it was collected. Only the great financial houses could tender in the competition, as the sums to be handled were large; and if it were confined to firms of Roman citizens only, the privilege was a valuable one, worth a great deal to the monopolists. Gaius proposed to give the monopoly to Roman bankers, obtain from them the very largest possible revenue, grant them a valuable privilege and at the same time secure their political support. . . . But even this was not the whole story.

For at least a century past, it had been illegal for senators to engage in trade. This law had thrown the control of the great financial and commercial corporations into the hands of the class just below the senatorial in rank. While, no doubt, they must often have handled senatorial money, their interests were

distinct from that of the senatorial class. They were the men who, if the senatorial order should be enlarged, would be its natural recruits. But the provincial governorships were just as rigidly the monopoly of the senatorial order. Since the passing of the *Lex Calpurnia* there had been an established court for the investigation of charges against provincial governors, and the jurors who sat in this court were exclusively men of senatorial rank. Quite obviously strong objection could be raised to this practice. If oppression in the provinces was to be tried before the friends and associates of the accused, there was in the majority of cases little likelihood of justice. An impartial jury was desirable. . . . Even a hostile jury would secure a more certain justice. To obtain an impartial jury was not impossible, though difficult. To obtain a hostile one was quite easy. The first plan of Gaius was to nominate three hundred of the citizen body whose property qualifications came next after those of the senatorial order—most of them would be bankers and financiers—and add them to the senate to form a new senatorial order, more adequate to the expanding demands of the Roman provincial government. From this new panel the jurors would be drawn. This plan, however, was never carried out. Time was too short for the completion of all the conversations and negotiations that would have been necessary for such a great change. The plan was therefore dropped, to linger for a hundred years in the thoughts of Roman statesmen as a reform necessary but almost impossible to put into operation. Gaius fell back upon a more limited plan—he disqualified senators from sitting upon the juries, and caused the juries to be drawn solely from the class with a property qualification which would include the financiers, and therefore the men who farmed the taxes, but would exclude the senators. And this plan he did put into operation, with results that lasted long after his death. So was formed the 'equestrian order'—which must not be confused with the military knights of the upper groups of the levy (many of them of senatorial rank) who served with the cavalry. While the military knights included senators, the civil *equites* intentionally excluded them.

He intended more than one result from this measure; he intended it to stiffen the administration of justice by bringing dishonest or oppressive governors before the examination of a

more critical tribunal; he intended to broaden the field from which the jury panels were recruited – for the men entitled by the new qualifications to serve in the courts were of course much more numerous than those entitled by the senatorial qualification; but he was perfectly conscious also that he was placing in the hands of the financiers a tremendous weapon against the senate – and he took care that the weapon should be sharp. Whether he contemplated the whole of the results which (as in due course we shall see) actually did follow is another question; but the main thing he wanted was to create a means of controlling and of crippling the oligarchy – the murderers of Tiberius and his own enemies – and as long as he obtained this he did not look too closely at the details. There can be no doubt that he succeeded. The new juries formed the first great constraint upon the power of the senate.

Yet one more purpose – and a serious one – was intended to be achieved by the legislation which created the new juries. Gaius aimed at marshalling the votes and the influence of the financial class solidly behind himself. As soon as the bankers, their friends and their employes realized the nature of the gift given them by control of the courts, Gaius would be able to rely upon a solid backing from this most important part of the electorate. He needed it, because the operation of his schemes of colonization, like that of Tiberius' Land Act, had the effect of sending out of Rome many of his most valuable supporters; and, willing as they might be to vote for him, he could not rely upon their ability to be present at the critical times. A new source of electoral support, continually present in Rome, would therefore be invaluable, and would go far to make his power permanent. . . . He calculated correctly (as wise men so often do) on everything except the time factor. He could not foresee the exact length of time that would elapse before the financiers realized whom it was their interest to support. The new support might arrive just too late to be of any practical benefit to Gaius himself. That, however, was a risk he had to face.

Seldom, probably, has a legislative programme of such length, intricacy and importance been passed through a constitutional assembly within one year. Part of the rapidity of the work was due to the fact that most of it had long ago

been outlined by Tiberius Gracchus, and that the questions involved had had time to sink into men's minds; but part was due to the strong will, incessant activity, persuasive tongue and business-like system of Gaius. . . . Tiberius may or may not have aspired to be a monarch: but Gaius was in good earnest for the time of his brief reign the first citizen and the uncrowned king of Rome.

V

There was no difficulty in securing the election of Gaius for a second term as tribune; and his power continued.

Had he been guided wholly by considerations of expedience, he might have slackened his pace and let some time elapse before he took up the next items of his policy. He was straying into realms which had not the advantage of the previous thought and advocacy of Tiberius. The electorate was unready. A long period of educative propaganda was necessary before it could be expected to grasp the questions at issue. Such a long period was the very thing which Gaius could not command. It was imperative that he should press on; for when he paused, he would fall.

The purpose of Gaius in this second year of his power was to lead the Roman towards an imperial policy — a policy designed to raise in the scale of unity, prosperity and patriotism that great Roman dominion which hitherto had been an almost accidental accretion. The time had come to simplify it, organize it and make it conscious of its dignity as the vastest and most majestic of commonwealths, inspired by Roman statesmanship and Greek thought. The senate had been absorbed in the problems of the centre. But these problems could be solved only on the circumference, by going out into the provinces, by developing as a great united whole the confused accretion of leagues and alliances and protectorates which clung round Rome. Gaius did not propose any innovations of a very startling nature. He designed little more than very simple steps towards very obvious goals. But any steps to any goals were liable to bewilder the Roman voter. All that afterwards became a commonplace — the conception of the imperial mission of Rome, her destiny to organize western civilization, her glory as the inaugurator of the reign of law throughout the

world – all this was still an undeveloped dream of genius which resided, in an elementary form, in the mind of Gaius Gracchus. The average Roman had not yet taken even the earliest step towards comprehending it.

The first and simplest part of his plans consisted in the establishment of a number of colonies of a higher grade than those founded in the previous year. He proposed to refound Tarentum, Capua and Carthage, as a beginning – all of them cities which had risen to greatness in the past because their geographical position in relation to the countries of production and the routes of exchange made them useful to the economic life of the Mediterranean. The second and more difficult part consisted in a very simple and by no means extreme plan for extending full Roman citizenship to citizens of all the Latin allies without distinction, and the Latin rights which these citizens had held in the past, to the outer ring of Italian allies. This was a cautious step towards the creation of one uniform citizenship in Italy.

Mild as it was, it alarmed the senate. Any proposal which involved extending or diluting the qualities of the central body would alarm the senate. In a contest of reason, it would have been easy to point out that there was no occasion for alarm, since the Latin allies had from time immemorial been to all intents as 'Roman' as the Romans. But it was not a contest of reason. The prejudices of Romans of all ranks and degrees had been touched. Even the ranks of Gaius' own supporters were split with dissension. This again was a risk he had to face, and he faced it bold and unblinking.

Hitherto the senate had been exclusively on the defensive. At this point, however, it took the initiative, and showed an originality and a subtlety which seem to hint that it had found a leader – or at any rate a mind to plan its campaigns.

VI

Among the tribunes associated with Gaius Gracchus during his second term of office was a very remarkable man, Marcus Livius Drusus. He belonged to a family which, like the Claudian, was incurably individualistic and eccentric. Unlike the Claudian, it was plebeian; it was rich and cultivated, and distinguished for advanced opinions and quick intelligence.

In politics it had taken little share. If a man were needed to perform with decision and dignity some action from which all other men shrank, a Livius was the person to choose. M. Livius Drusus was perfectly aware of the fate of Octavius and the power of Gaius Gracchus. Nevertheless, he calmly undertook to impose his tribunician veto upon the resolution for granting the Romans franchise to the Latin allies. Having done this, he waited proudly for the thunderbolt to fall.

None fell. After a pause, Gaius decided that the moment was not suitable for carrying the franchise question further. He was perhaps wise, for it had already split the *populares* into hostile camps. Marcus Livius Drusus was left the admired of all beholders – the only man who had successfully defied the Gracchi.

At this point some unknown genius in the senatorial ranks thought of a way in which to utilize Drusus. The latter was known to entertain political ideas which the more conservative senators might regret, but of which the most conservative was not particularly frightened. There was something essentially unpractical about everything Drusus did. The senate now thought of the amusing plan of running Drusus as a reformer in competition with Gaius. Drusus was quite willing to do his share of the compact. He was encouraged, therefore, to bring forward in legislative form a complete scheme of colonization for the benefit of the poor. When Gaius, having spent some time in Africa superintending the foundation of the new city of Carthage, returned to Rome, he found that Drusus had drawn away from him the support of many of the more credulous and more ignorant voters, who were enthusiastic over the golden promises held out to them in the Livian scheme. The most fatal effect of the programme of Drusus was that it damaged the attractiveness of Gaius as an entertainment. The elector began to be exhausted with counter-attractions, and the edge of his discernment was blunted. It was not enough that Gaius could count upon the more intelligent voters. The wise men were far too few; he needed the tremendous cohorts of the fools; and the fools had gone over to Livius Drusus. To the end Gaius retained not only the enthusiasm and affection but the passionate adoration of those who understood his purposes and his spirit. But he lost the decisive margin of voters who had put

him into office. When he stood for the third period of office, he failed to poll the necessary number of votes, and was not returned.

Not only was Gaius himself rejected, but the transfer of votes involved the success in the consular elections of the nominees of the senate, L. Opimius and Q. Fabius. Opimius was the dangerous man. He was the blackguard and partisan who had destroyed Fregellæ, and his election at this juncture was due to the hostility of the electors to the proposal of extending the Franchise. We are by no means compelled to suppose that Opimius was a typical and representative member of the senatorial order. There were many honourable and prudent men in the ranks of the senate, who supported its cause with good reason, and were capable of advocating it in such a way as to lead it to victory. But in this crisis control was snatched out of their hands by men who cared nothing for the real issues at stake, nor for the reasoned advocacy which could convince the waverers; in the eyes of men like Opimius, the privileges of the senatorial order were merely material advantages which could not be justified, and which it was foolish to try to justify; and they proposed to defend by the appropriate means of violence and injustice the privileges which they mistakenly imagined to be selfish immunities intended for their personal profit. From the day when Opimius came into power, the cause of the oligarchy slipped further and further down. It not merely did not, but could not, recover the prestige which once it had possessed.

VII

Precisely what could be done against Gaius Gracchus and his party was uncertain; but the first trial of strength was made over the question of the new Colony which had been founded on the site of Carthage. A resolution was brought forward to cancel the enactment by which this colony had been established. The result would show the relative position of parties.

Gaius still had a great following; but he himself was now condemned to silence. In the senate, a man who held no office could still speak and hold the attention of the house; defence was easy, and even opposition was possible. But the procedure of the Assembly offered no such scope for debate and opposition.

Unless a tribunc^{us} invited Gaius up to the rostra, he had no right to raise his voice, and, indeed, was liable to penalty if he raised it. But to condemn to silence the greatest speaker in Rome – and in some ways, the greatest speaker Rome ever produced – was like shackling a lion: his mere breathing, and the radiation of his power, drew all eyes to him. Cornelia, apprehensive of her son's personal safety, sent for some of her country slaves – stalwarts whose task was to stand by unobtrusively and keep keen watch over their young lord. Gaius himself thought it wisest to keep away from the assembly – but Fulvius Flaccus argued otherwise. Let them all go, he urged; and at last Gaius went.

The preliminary meeting was up on the Capitol, and while the preparations were being made, Gaius paced to and fro under one of the colonnades, absorbed in thought. The Romans, having no very good artificial light, were early risers, and made the most of daylight. This meeting was timed for sunrise – and while Gaius paced, the sun was no doubt coming up over the eastern hills where Præneste lay, and shining with long morning shadows into the porticoes, glancing upon their garish, Etruscan colouring and upon the temple roofs – not yet gilded – and the great Quadriga upon the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus – still of terra-cotta, not yet of bronze. The emperors – the spiritual heirs of Gaius – were some day to build of bronze and marble and to make Jupiter's gilded roof blaze like the sun; but as Gaius walked, a prey to gloom and the sense of failure, he is little likely to have pictured to himself the thousands of glorious dawns that would still rise over the Capitol, and the marvellous buildings that would shimmer there in the morning beams: for when a man feels his end drawing near, he feels that the world is ending with him. Standing there, he might have seen – with the prophet's eye – the Rome that was to be, and that to a large extent was to spring from the tradition he began. But he did not think of it.

Opimius had called the meeting, and he proceeded to make the prefatory sacrifice and to consult the omens. As it chanced, Fulvius Flaccus and the Gracchan crowd were close by, and the attendant, Antullus, in carrying out the entrails of the sacrificial victim, passed through its midst. What happened was disputed, but the Gracchans alleged that he called for the way to

be cleared, and used insulting remarks about traitors; it was also alleged that he stretched out his hand in a threatening way. In any case, whether or not he did so, some angry Gracchan drew his writing stylus, as slender and sharp as a stiletto, and killed the man upon the spot.

It was a fateful deed. When Gaius heard the commotion and ascertained the cause, he knew that he had been delivered over to the enemy. He immediately withdrew his people, and held an impromptu conference down below in the Forum, at which he spoke severely to those who had been responsible for this fruitless and mischievous crime, and attempted to explain how entirely opposed it was to his own wishes. This was a second breach of the law; for now, technically, he had become guilty of persuading citizens to leave a lawfully-convoked meeting of the People. But it is difficult to see what else he could have done.

In the meantime, rain came down and all business was postponed to the morrow.

VIII

The next morning, Opimius presided over a meeting of the senate. Soon after the proceedings had begun, a funeral procession entered the Forum, and with solemnity and ceremony approached the door of the senate-house. Simulating surprise, Opimius adjourned the sitting and led the *patres* out to see the unusual spectacle. There, before their threshold, as if appealing for justice, the bier of Antullus had been laid. . . .

Opimius knew his audience. As soon as the spectacle before them had thoroughly penetrated to the notice of the *patres* expressions of shocked amazement began, and expressions of horror at the crime. These expressions came in, even at the moment, for derisive criticism from some of the Gracchans, who remembered the death of Tiberius. But Opimius had judged his ground better than they may have thought. To most of the senators, even those of moderate views and good feeling, Tiberius had been a man openly grasping at monarchy, and in virtue of that fact killing had been no murder. But Antullus had not been grasping at monarchy. He had merely been carrying out his duty—and his duty was the sacred one of assisting in sacrifices to the divine powers. To murder a

man engaged in the service of the altar was indeed a hateful crime and argued depraved and abandoned standards on the part of those guilty of it. . . . Opimius knew that they would thus feel, and he was relying upon it. As soon as the sitting was resumed, a motion was laid before the house authorising the consuls 'to see that the state took no harm.' This is the first occasion on which we hear of the famous formula, the Emergency Decree. It was an extraordinarily vague and elastic formula, which practically placed unlimited power in the hands of Opimius; but in its then mood the senate passed it. . . . Even so, there were expostulations from men who had no passion for civil bloodshed. It was agreed that before any force was employed, Gaius Gracchus and Fulvius Flaccus should be given an opportunity to defend themselves before the senate.

We may wonder what would have happened if Gaius had accepted the invitation, and had used in his own defence the whole of his tremendous power as a speaker. We may feel it to be by no means certain that he would have failed. But he seems to have felt differently. He did not care to put himself alive into the hands of such a man as Opimius; and although, by immemorial right, the consul had authority to request the presence of any citizen at his pleasure, it is possible that Gaius, conscious of his own status as ex-tribune and representative of the Assembly, hated to bow his head to the authority of the senate. It is moreover very probable that he disputed the right of the senate to pass any such resolution as it had passed, or to authorise the infliction upon citizens of the death penalty without formal trial. He refused to go; and Opimius summoned the upper groups of the military levy—the cavalry groups drawn exclusively from the senatorial class and the social ranks immediately below it—to meet in arms next morning. The lower groups, which might be disaffected, he took care not to summon.

Fulvius, convinced that the whole procedure was illegal and the Emergency Decree an intolerable tyranny, issued to his followers the word for resistance. Gaius felt no enthusiasm for resistance, but he had no alternative. He was being carried away upon a stream too strong for him to stem.

IX

A troubled and heavy night followed. Every one realized that civil war was on foot, and none could tell where it would stop. The house of Gracchus was a house of sadness and farewell: but in the house of Fulvius Flaccus the wine flowed, and the patriots, crowned with garlands, had their last jolly night together before the day came when none of them would be jolly any more.

The morning dawned, and Fulvius was carried from the table by his servants, tidied up, and reminded that he had an engagement to fulfil. As soon as he had collected himself, he took down and distributed the trophies of arms that decorated his walls – mementoes of his old Gallic campaigns; and the party with valiant whoops and war-cries, breathing fire and slaughter, set out for the Aventine. Gaius put aside all suggestions that he should carry arms, and left his house in ordinary civilian costume, but with a small dagger under his cloak. His parting from his wife was tender and touching. She had no illusions, and knew that it was for ever. When, at last, he gently disengaged her hands and set out down the street, she fell down as one dead; and the servants picked her up and bore her to the house of her brother, P. Licinius Crassus, who was well able to protect her.

Fulvius Flaccus had fortified the Temple of Diana on the Aventine – the ancient headquarters of the Latin League. He had no reason to doubt his ability to defend the position. Gaius urged him to make one last effort for a peaceful settlement; and Fulvius sent his son with a message to the senate. Opimius would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender. Gaius, with a heavy heart, now undertook to swallow his pride – and even his principles – and go to the senate and see what he could do by words. This his friends would not allow. The son of Flaccus was again sent; and this time Opimius detained him.

The attack upon the Temple of Diana was just such a surprise as the onslaught that had ended in the death of Tiberius. Fulvius Flaccus could very probably have held out against the military levy of citizens which Opimius had raised; but the consul played a totally unforeseen card which upset all

preconceived calculations. He had a body of Cretan archers – Greek professional soldiers. It was these archers who took the Temple of Diana. Their shafts mowed down the helpless defenders and strewed the precincts with dead and dying. It was every man for himself. Fulvius was dragged ignominiously out of the hiding-place where he had taken refuge, and was slain. His two sons were also killed. Opimius offered terms to the rank and file, who laid down their arms.

Gaius took no part in the fighting. He had entered the shrine of Diana, and there proposed to kill himself. From this he was dissuaded by his friends, who begged him in the general interest to preserve his life. The story is told – it ranks high among the stories of famous curses – that before he left the sanctuary he knelt, and prayed that men guilty of such ingratitude and treachery as the people of Rome had shown might always remain in slavery . . . and it was believed by later ages that this prayer was fulfilled.

His flight was skilfully planned, and was nearly successful. While the troops were still engaged at the Temple of Diana and its approaches, Gaius descended the hill at the Temple of Luna, and gained their rear. Unfortunately, in doing so he sprained his ankle. The search and the pursuit did not overtake him until he was close to the old Sublician Bridge. Then his friend Pomponius turned to bay, and held off the pursuers until Gaius was on the bridge. Whether Horatius ever kept the bridge or not against the Etruscans may be uncertain; but it is certain that Lætorius held it against the soldiers of Opimius, until Gaius, with his lame ankle, helped by his servant Philocrates, had disappeared into the distance on the Janiculan side. The people cheered Gaius as he ran – but no one helped, and no one dared to furnish the horse for which he prayed. He could go no further. As soon as Lætorius had fallen, the pursuers hastened across the bridge. Gaius had taken refuge in the sacred grove of Furrina. Some said that the faithful Philocrates killed his master, and then himself. Others said that Philocrates clung so close to Gaius, that both had to be slain together. In any case, in that grove of Furrina died Gaius Sempronius Gracchus and his servant Philocrates.

The man who killed Gaius cut off his head and carried it away. Opimius had offered their weight in gold for the heads of

Gaius and of Fulvius Flaccus. But the man who bore the head was met by Septimuleius, a former friend of Gaius, and this person scattered out on the ground the most wonderful brains that had ever yet been in a Roman head – and, filling the skull up with lead, he carried it on his spear point to Opimius. Its weight betrayed the trick. . . . But the head of Gaius Gracchus had not been estimated at its true value. There was not enough gold in Rome to have paid for it.

X

Three thousand of the partisans of Gaius Gracchus perished in the judicial investigation that followed his death. Opimius stamped on the flame – and for a little while he seemed to stamp it out: but he only stamped it in. The fall and death of Gaius made his memory eternal. His fame slowly deepened and expanded; the spot where he died was consecrated; men worshipped at his statues; even those who hated him had to submit to the influence of his thoughts, while those who loved him remembered him as half divine.

His career had lasted two years and a few weeks.

Opimius, many years later, died bankrupt and in exile, hated and detested by his fellow-citizens.

CHAPTER XIII

GAIUS MARIUS, THE MILITARY DICTATOR

(120 B.C. – 100 B.C.)

I

The ten years which succeeded the death of Gaius Gracchus were barren, restless years. No great outstanding figures seemed to represent and express the contending parties. Men groped uneasily for guidance. The *populares* were by no means entirely crushed. As soon as Opimius laid down office a tribune, Q. Decius, filed an indictment against him, and there was a great trial before the Assembly, such as, in days past and days to come, would have convulsed Rome and furnished a platform for the giants to have fought on: but now only small men carried on the war. Carbo – once a shining light of the *populares* – spoke up for Opimius, and the Assembly, weakened by the reign of terror that had swept away many of its stoutest defences, accepted the contention that Gaius had been aiming at monarchy, and that, this being so, killing was no murder. So Opimius was acquitted, to meet a harsher tribunal later on. The year after the acquittal of Opimius was the year in which another man, whose fate was destined to be intertwined with his, made his first mark in Rome – Gaius Marius.

No man ever represented more perfectly than Marius that race of Latin peasants (he was Volscian by descent) who had been the early rivals and foes of Rome, and later on had become the chief strength of her armies. Marius came from Cercatæ near Arpinum, close to the Samnite border – a stalwart, uncultivated man, three years older than Gaius Gracchus, and much slower in development: not very clever, hardly very cordial, not much of a talker, but stubborn and strong – a man of character, who seemed exempt from all human weaknesses save an undue anxiety to possess the good opinion of others. He had grown up in the depths of the quiet Italian country-side,

far from cities, working his father's small farm. His first military service was in Spain under Scipio Æmilianus, during the tribuneship of Tiberius Gracchus. Marius attracted the notice of Scipio himself, not so much for his smartness and reliability as a soldier as for that readiness to put the work before all other considerations which was precisely what Scipio wanted and appreciated. The first praise which Marius received sank deep into a soul always acutely sensitive to praise and blame. He grasped the broad, simple conception that he could earn the praise which he loved through the qualities which Scipio admired in him.

Such news of events in Rome as reached the army in Spain was probably a good deal coloured by the private prejudices of Scipio. Hence, Marius was never drawn into the orbit of the great tribunes. He remained a soldier, very little acquainted with the civil world. At thirty-six, when Gaius fell, Marius was still an unknown man. But the later career of Marius suggests that, although he was a mere spectator of these great events, he grasped at least one idea out of the political philosophy of the Gracchi – the conception that men like himself, the small farmer-owner, were the salt of the earth and the most important element in the State. He was an uncultured man, but he grasped that.

There were very good reasons why Marius should avoid connecting himself with a party. His ambition was for a military career; and to achieve this he needed the interest of men who would have refused to help a radical. It was the support of L. Cæcilius Metellus Dalmaticus which enabled him to reach the tribuneship. But once elected, Marius had the moral courage to face the necessities of his office. The tribunes agreed upon a measure for regulating the conditions under which the Assembly voted when acting as a judicial body, and commissioned Marius to carry it up to the senate. It had been the custom for the barriers near the ballot-boxes to be lined with the political agents of all the parties, who kept watch upon the voters and sometimes exercised more influence upon the vote than was desirable. This practice the tribunes determined to stop. When the bill reached the senate, however, the consul L. Aurelius Cotta objected to it on the ground that the senate had not been properly consulted, and he induced the House to

prepare an adverse resolution, and to call Marius before it. . . . Now was the test for Marius!

Marius came, grasped the situation, and at once declared that the dignity of the tribunician power was being infringed. He threatened Cotta with imprisonment unless the resolution were withdrawn. Cotta appealed to his colleague, Metellus Dalmaticus himself—who rose to record his agreement with the objection. Marius at once called the officer who attended the tribunes, and directed him to arrest Metellus. . . . Metellus appealed to the other tribunes—but the bill had the support of the whole body, and none would intervene. The senate therefore withdrew the resolution, and accepted the bill.

The importance of the episode was that it illustrated in a remarkable way the power of the tribunes when they were united. It had another importance for Marius—it made his reputation. When, however, a Corn Bill was put before the Assembly, he helped to secure its rejection. Hence he concluded his period of office with a name for strength and courage, but without indentifying himself with either party.

He had not perfectly achieved his hopes. Neither party was inclined, in ordinary circumstances, to support his candidature for a higher magistracy. But neither party would hesitate to trust him if an emergency arose.

Would an emergency ever arise?

II

Just after the year of Marius's tribuneship Micipsa, Masinissa's son, died, and left his kingdom to Hiempsal and Adherbal his sons, and Jugurtha his nephew conjointly: but that this would cause an emergency hardly seemed particularly likely. Even when Jugurtha murdered Hiempsal, and Adherbal fled to Rome to protest, it was reasonable to anticipate that the intervention of the Roman government would soon restore order in Africa. When a commission, headed by no less a person than Opimius himself, set out for Africa, it seemed as if the matter were practically settled.

Marius was busy trying to secure election as *ædile*. He failed, as was natural enough. *Ædiles* were expected to possess much money, and Marius had very little. Their duties included celebrating the great festivals and games—usually at their

own expense. The mission returned from Numidia having settled Adherbal and Jugurtha on their thrones; and Marius decided to stand for the prætorship. This time he managed to scrape in at the bottom of the poll, to the indignation of certain more or less interested parties. . . . What was a man like that doing on the board of prætors? Where did he get the money to finance his electoral campaign? There must be graft somewhere! So an investigation was held.

The chief evidence against him was that the servant (a non-voter) of a friend of his, had been seen inside the polling enclosure; but this servant explained that his master had been thirsty, and had called for a drink of water – and that was how he chanced to be there. He came out again at once. . . . Gaius Herennius was called to give evidence, but pointed out that Marius was his client,¹ and the law absolved a patron from giving evidence against his client. To this, Marius replied that he did not care. Herennius could give all the evidence he liked. The jurors at first had been inclined to take a dark view of Marius, as a low person who ought not to be a prætor: but they cheered up at this, and seemed to feel that he was a stout fellow after all. When the votes were examined, there was a tie; and, by the rules of Roman legal procedure, this meant an acquittal. So Marius remained a prætor.

Marius was about as qualified for the office of prætor as he was for the post of dancing-master: but it was the necessary avenue to a provincial governorship. He obtained Further Spain, and proved that – no matter what his deficiencies as a legal luminary may have been – he was excellently adapted to this kind of task. A governorship, even for a perfectly honest governor, usually meant a fortune as well. On his return, at the age of forty-three, with his character for honesty, straightforwardness and ability, he married the daughter of Gaius Julius Cæsar, and entered the social world to which the Cæsars belonged. It is possible that old Gaius Julius did not give his daughter to Marius merely on the strength of the new man's moral character – though that may have weighed with him: he may have discerned a touch of the genius which

¹ It is just possible that Herennius had advanced Marius the money to enable him to stand for election,

in years to come was to make Marius one of the most famous names in the story of Rome.

The truth was that in these years after the death of Gaius Gracchus Rome was drifting with a curious helplessness and blindness, feeling the lack of that instant response which is brought about by a great man's touch on the helm of State. No firm guidance or clear direction gave men confidence. No external events decided their policy for them. It was as if, for the time being, the state were drifting between walls of rock which shut out the view. Marius, during the year of his marriage, was probably in Rome while that extraordinary outburst of hysteria took place, the scandal of the Vestals. Three of the virgin priestesses of Vesta were alleged to have broken their vows: and the public, taking its usual interest in the proceedings, got the bit between its teeth and ran away in one of the rare episodes of uncontrolled mob-psychology that old Rome affords.

The 'formula' in such cases is familiar and regular. There is usually an uncorroborated witness on whom the whole set of accusations depends: a readiness on the part of public opinion to believe anything, as long as it is sufficiently scandalous: a court easily influenced by public opinion, and a judge prepared to bully, browbeat, and pass savage sentences. All these elements were present. The witness was a slave, who started the avalanche. Once he had set it moving, all the other witnesses were obliged to follow him in their own defence, or go into the dock as accomplices. The Pontifex Maximus was the legal authority: but a tribune (a curious illustration of the dangers in the Gracchan method !) got the Assembly to transfer the case by legislative enactment to a special tribunal. The bloodthirsty judge was L. Cassius Longinus the prætor. Together, they swore away the reputations of the three unhappy vestals, and those of a large number of Roman citizens alleged to be their lovers; they zealously employed torture to extract confessions from witnesses whose statements were not sufficiently sensational; and for a time hardly any friendless or unpopular person was safe. The Senate ordered the Sacred Books to be consulted – a customary resort in times of trouble; and the keepers of the books, after an official conference, added to the sensations of the day by alleging that they directed the

solemn burial alive of two Greeks and two Gauls as human sacrifices; and this order was duly carried out. . . . When this collective nerve-storm blew over, it left behind it, among the relations of the victims and among observers like Marius, a very strong conviction of the necessity of a discipline somewhere in the state, capable of breaking up and dispersing these waves of popular emotion. The restlessness of the popular mind, and its terrifying readiness to find scapegoats, were all too clear.

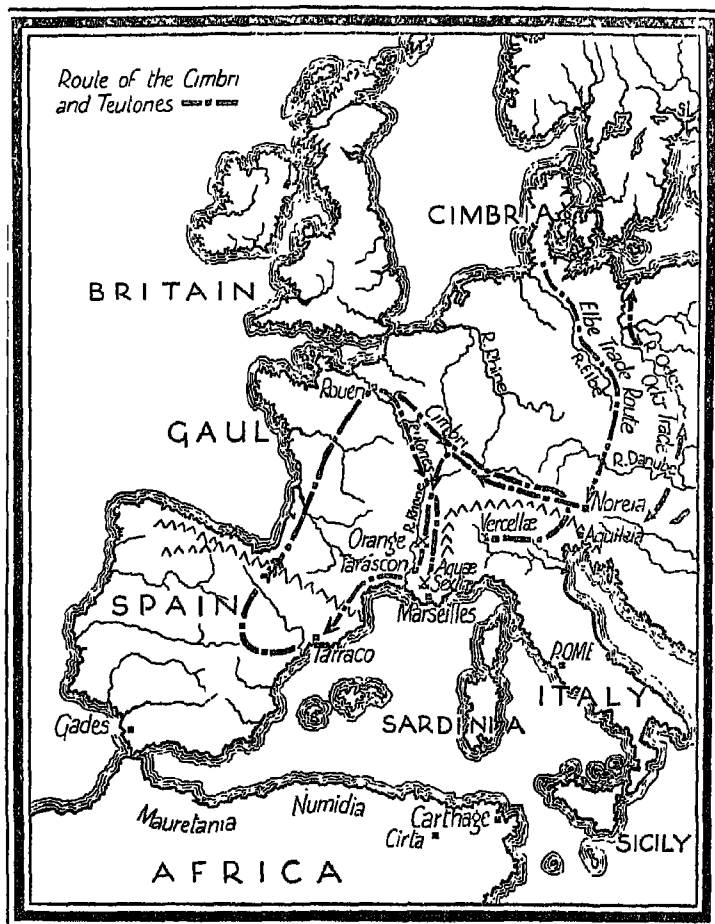
It was this very year, too, that after the long period of comparative quiet, during which the republic had been free from any express danger, the sound of the rapids ahead again became audible, though not as yet recognizable. A very remarkable episode took place on the upper Danube, where a great raid of people from the unknown regions of central Europe crossed the eastern chain of the Alps and penetrated into Roman territory. The consul, Gnaeus Papirius Carbo, experienced a serious reverse at Noreia. This passed without very much notice at the time, but it was an event of historic importance, for it was the first appearance within the circle of civilization of the Cimbri – the forerunners of that great migration which for a thousand years was to pour itself upon the southern lands.

More was soon to be heard of the Cimbri; but for the time being attention was diverted from them to more immediate problems. The Roman citizen had two subjects to occupy his mind when he walked in the Forum, met his friends and enquired the news: one was the proceedings of the tribune Gaius Servilius Glaucia – and the other was the proceedings of Jugurtha. Let us consider Glaucia first.

III

It had taken a long time for the work of Gaius Gracchus to produce its full effect. His changes in the qualifications for jurors had not at first revealed their own importance. But the perpetual attempt of the senate to recover its power over the juries, and some experience of the working of the system, had gradually aroused the bankers and financiers to the meaning of these new qualifications. For some time past there had been a scheme on foot to review and revise the law relating to the investigation of offences by provincial governors. The

Sketch Map V



The Route of the Cimbri

imminence of the event reminded the leaders of the moneyed classes of the possibility that, in making the revision, the *optimates* might induce the electors to approve a change in the jury qualifications. Glaucia was the man who stepped into the shoes of Gaius Gracchus, realized the possibilities of the case, and arranged the alliance between the financiers and the *populares* which Gaius Gracchus had designed. Glaucia, during his tribuneship, drafted and introduced a bill improving the procedure of the courts, and making it possible to recover damages from allies and subordinates of a guilty governor, who had shared his illegal gains; finally, it confirmed the jury qualifications.

The action of Glaucia had the effect which Gaius Gracchus had long ago foreseen and counted on; it created a cordial alliance between the financiers and the *populares*. The combined electors of the two parties had no difficulty in outvoting those of the *optimates*, and the bill was passed and became part of the law of Rome. Just at this time¹ Jugurtha, far away in Africa, brought off the great *coup d'état* which he had long been planning. He drove Adherbal into Cirta and besieged him there. The appeals of Adherbal to the protection of Rome were imperfectly and unwillingly met by the senate, which did not wish to extend the scope of Roman government into Numidia or interfere with its independent government. The commission which the senate sent to Numidia had very little effect upon the action of Jugurtha. Cirta was held, not by Numidians, but by the colony of Italian merchants settled there. These men, believing that the senate would give them no help, advised Adherbal to surrender on terms. When the town was handed over to Jugurtha, every one of the terms agreed upon was violated. The Italian defenders were massacred; Adherbal was tortured to death.

The fall of Cirta and the massacre of the Roman subjects there convulsed Rome. The public opinion of the great city had long been restless and disturbed. Now it was furnished with a real occasion for excitement; and it rose to the boiling point. All might have passed off in mere rage and confusion,

¹ This is assuming that the tribuneship of Glaucia was in 112 B.C. – but this date fits the facts so neatly that it is hard to doubt it. Cf. Greenidge, *History of Rome*, p. 309, f.n. 2.

had it not been for the legacy of Gaius Gracchus. The real significance of the alliance between the *populares* and the *equites* suddenly became visible. The massacre of Cirta involved hundreds of Roman business men in serious monetary loss and in the no less serious sentimental loss of friends, agents and correspondents. They called upon their new allies; and the senate found itself confronted with an overwhelming combination before which it was helpless.

The tribune Gaius Memmius was the leader of the new coalition. Before his bitter criticism and the united front shown by the Assembly, the senate was compelled to give way. An army was at once prepared for Africa, and every necessary step was taken to vindicate the prestige of Rome. The command was given to the consul L. Calpurnius Bestia. Jugurtha's envoys were ordered, unless they bore terms of unconditional submission, to leave Italy within ten days.

From the first the contention of the senate had been that it was impossible to fight a successful war against Jugurtha. The wily Numidian merely disappeared into the desert until the Romans went home. No great towns or urban commerce furnished an objective to strike at. The only way of ending the war was by the capture of Jugurtha; and the capture of Jugurtha was impossible. Jugurtha himself appreciated this point of view, and relied upon it. Before very long, Jugurtha and the consul struck a bargain. Jugurtha should make a nominal surrender – a few elephants, some cattle and a small indemnity would be enough – and the consul would welcome the opportunity to get quit of a war which should never have been begun. With the approval of his advisers, the consul signed this arrangement, and as far as they were concerned, the war ended.

This treaty was received in Rome with scandalized astonishment. The Assembly had intended Jugurtha to be punished for the massacre of Cirta; and here he was, all his crimes forgiven and his wickedness blest. Memmius had no difficulty in carrying the Assembly with him when he demonstrated that the whole thing was a put-up job. Let them test it; let them call Jugurtha to appear before the Assembly. If his surrender were real, he would come.

Jugurtha had the courage to come. Memmius produced

the Numidian king on the platform before the Assembly. But the scandalous revelations which it was hoped he might give were prevented by the intervention of another tribune, G. Bæbius, who forbade the king to speak. Attempts to break the deadlock were fruitless. Neither threats nor persuasions would move Bæbius.

The rage of the Assembly at this blocking procedure was increased to something more when it became evident that Jugurtha had used his residence in Rome, at the invitation of the Assembly, to commit the cowardly murder of his kinsman Massiva, a refugee under the protection of the Roman name. Jugurtha was promptly sent back to Africa, and orders were issued to cancel the treaty and continue the war. But the impossibility of capturing Jugurtha remained. The new consul, Spurius Albinus, marched about Numidia all the summer without succeeding; and in the autumn returned home to report his ill success. He found the senate and the Assembly at loggerheads, a deadlock everywhere and no magistrates elected. While he was absent in Rome his brother Aulus Albinus imprudently fell into a trap, and was captured with forty thousand Roman troops by Jugurtha.

The senate had been singularly unfortunate in all its actions. Its whole case had been that it was impossible to capture Jugurtha; but the more it proved its case the more it was accused of having created the difficulties from which it suffered. It could do nothing now but surrender meekly to its critics.

The vengeance of Gaius Gracchus was pursuing it. The coalition prepared to fix responsibility upon the leaders of the *optimates*. By a singular irony the means used was a special commission, such as Opimius had employed to carry destruction among the followers of the Gracchi. Gaius Mamilius Limetanus was the proposer and the Mamilian Commission was the name by which it was known. The charges were of treasonable corruption and the acceptance of bribes from the public enemy. Opimius was one of the first who were tried and condemned and went into exile. Lucius Bestia (who drew up the treaty with Jugurtha), Gaius Cato, Gaius Galba and Spurius Albinus joined him. It was determined to reorganize the war and give it this time to a reliable man, Q. Cæcilius Metellus. The deadlock was broken, therefore, through the

election of Metellus by the massed votes of the *equites* and the *populares*. . . . Metellus had the complete confidence of all parties. His very faults made him trustworthy.

Now for the first time the war was treated as a military operation instead of a political problem. In selecting his staff, Metellus considered military ability only; so that although the last occasion of contact between Marius and the Metelli had been a little unfriendly, he had no hesitation in inviting Marius to accompany him to Africa; and Marius readily accepted.

The coalition thus, by a natural succession of steps, had placed Gaius Marius in Africa, in a position where all his ability could prove itself, and all his strength of character have free play.

IV

Twelve months later Jugurtha was still uncaught, and there seemed very little likelihood that he ever would be caught. No one could say that Metellus had been bribed; it was quite obvious that he was doing his best with zeal and uprightness. The senate had the satisfaction of watching the discomfiture of its critics. They had had their way – and this was the result!

The leaders of the coalition, acutely conscious of the difficulty into which they had unexpectedly drifted, were very ready indeed to listen to any one who could suggest a way out. As the year wore, the heads of the great Roman business houses began to hear from their African correspondents with remarkable unanimity the praises of the legate G. Marius, his interesting views and his belief that he could finish the war if he were given the opportunity. The possibility was too important to be ignored. Before long, the political leaders in Rome had acquainted themselves with the views and person of Marius. They decided to let him have the opportunity he asked for.

The views of Marius, expressed in many a conversation with the Roman civilian agents in Africa, were as simple as they were revolutionary. Any one could understand them. He laughed at Metellus as a pompous amateur, who did not know his job. What was wanted was simply a properly trained professional commander with a properly trained army. The professional commander would know where to hit and what to hit at; and the trained army could hit it.

Such contentions were convincing to men who already knew something of the grave defects which were gradually vitiating the Roman armies. The Gracchi had tried to remedy some of them. The changes in the social and economic world of Rome of course had their counterpart in the military world. It was no longer possible to raise armies for long service in Spain or Africa on the same basis that once had sufficed for Italian campaigns against Pyrrhus or Hannibal. The whole system needed revision: the organization and training must be recast.

As soon as the political leaders were satisfied that the ideas of Marius offered a way out for them, the whole force of the coalition was put at his disposal. The first task was to get him to Rome. The personal presence of a candidate was absolutely necessary for election to the consulship. When Marius applied for leave, Metellus was politely incredulous. For so long now the consulship had been the monopoly, not merely of the oligarchy, but of a ring of particular families in the oligarchy, that the idea of a man like Marius securing election seemed nonsense to Metellus. 'Wait till my boy here is ready, and you can stand in company,' said Metellus, humorously. . . . He was talking to a man with very little sense of humour and no sense at all of that kind of humour. Marius stubbornly repeated his request for leave. . . . Metellus, provoked at this apparently idle obstinacy, put it off until the last moment. When Marius at last got permission he showed what kind of driving force was behind his application. He rode for Utica as if life and death hung on his journey. Before he went on board the augur who conducted the religious service (and who probably had information denied to the general public) foretold great good fortune beyond his wildest dreams. Four days later, Marius was in Rome, and was introduced to the electors. He was no speaker – but they liked his ugly looks. They approved his tone when he told them of the inefficiency reigning at the headquarters of Metellus. They were delighted when he said that given the necessary means, he would take Jugurtha, dead or alive. He was always sensitive to other people's attitude towards him, and under the smiles and applause of the electors he became perhaps a little intoxicated and said rather more than was wise.

He was elected by a handsome majority; the first man for

many a long day to reach the consulship from such a beginning as his.

There was plenty to talk about – for Silanus, the colleague of Metellus in the consulship the year before, had gone to Gaul and had been badly defeated by the Cimbri, the same people who had defeated Carbo at Noreia. Evidently some intervention there would ultimately be necessary. It was agreed, however, that Marius should take up the African war as his first task. Other things could wait.

v

The mere election of Marius had, in itself, seemed to the oligarchy a revolution. The military reforms which he now proceeded to carry out seemed an even more startling and shocking innovation. He proceeded to enrol a voluntary army, a paid army. He scrapped the whole organization of the conscript levy and the property qualifications and the 'classes.' The whole theory – long growing fainter and more tenuous – that the Roman soldier was a citizen equipped at his own expense, now went by the board. Marius invited the raw human material – as raw as it liked as long as it was good – and undertook to feed, clothe, house and teach it, and pay it some pocket money from the treasury of the state. He simplified the organization and made it more uniform; but his main task during his first six months of office was to gather men and train them into a professional army.

Startling as the change may have seemed to the oligarchy, completely as it broke away from the accepted theories of the Roman constitution, it was nevertheless only the last logical step in a long process. The Hannibalic war was the agency which really wrought the change; Marius only completed the evolution by adjusting the organization and qualifications to the conditions of the new era.¹

Yet the oligarchy was not wrong in perceiving in the new consul and his army reforms the first shadow of the military dictatorship. Marius himself was no philosopher, and it is probable that he cared little for the political aspect of the problem. His interest in the subject was exclusively military.

¹ The army which won Zama was a volunteer army, and might be considered a precedent for the army of Marius. See back to Chapter VIII.

But he was constructing a weapon which, in the hands of other men, at another time, might change the balance of the state. Tiberius Gracchus had been clubbed by informal rioters, Gaius Gracchus had been overthrown by Cretan archers and the electors had been helpless to prevent it. Now the answer to Opimius had been found: the professional army. The army might well prove to be the instrument of the next dictator.

VI

The first thing, however, was to prove the power of the instrument. The colleague of Marius was L. Cassius Longinus, once the president of the court which had tried the Vestals. While Marius shipped his new army across to Africa, Cassius set out for Gaul with the old type of levy to deal with the Cimbri. Marius must have felt some concern when, before many months had gone, the news arrived that Cassius had not only been defeated by the Cimbri, but slain. Evidently the new army was much needed in Gaul. It could not, however, be spared. Before it could occupy itself with the Cimbri it had to rescue the coalition from discredit by capturing Jugurtha; and to this aim Marius addressed himself.

His method was one which had been somewhat beyond the horizon of Metellus. Marius knew, as Metellus did not, that the power of Jugurtha was due to his mobility; and his mobility depended upon the chain of fortified depots from which he drew his supplies. Marius had planned two particular measures for the African campaign in addition to his general military reforms — first, a special cavalry force that could keep up with Jugurtha's movements, and secondly, a systematic attack upon his supply depots. His quæstor, a hitherto unknown young man named Lucius Cornelius Sulla, was the officer deputed to organize and bring over the cavalry force.

Sulla did not arrive until late in the year. In the meantime Marius had cleaned up the supply depots along the whole of the southern frontier of Numidia, and made it impossible for Jugurtha to rely upon moving a large force across the desert. Jugurtha was forced westward. When Sulla at last effected his junction with Marius, the latter had just finished clearing the western frontier that lay next to Mauretania. Jugurtha had no base left and his supply depots were gone. His one

remaining chance of keeping the field was to persuade Bocchus, the Mauretanian King, to join him against the Romans and to provide him with a new base of operations. Bocchus tentatively agreed.

The entry of Bocchus into the war meant a long, harassing and dangerous retreat for Marius. In the fierce fighting which accompanied it the Romans showed once more that they had nothing to fear from native African troops. Bocchus viewed the results of the fighting and made up his mind. He resolved that it was impossible to expel the Romans from Africa, and that the best course for himself would be to throw over Jugurtha and make peace. Sulla was the man whom Marius sent to conduct the negotiations with Bocchus.

Marius hardly quite realized that his quæstor was a man deep in the counsels of the *optimates* and armed with a clearer knowledge of the inwardness of the situation than he was himself. Sulla performed his mission with tact and success. Bocchus sent his official envoys to Rome, where, coached by Sulla, they obtained all that Bocchus wanted. But behind these official negotiations the quæstor carried on a second and secret negotiation. Their nature became visible when the treaty between Bocchus and the Roman government had been finally concluded. The king sent again for Sulla and into Sulla's hands he committed the great prize – the person of Jugurtha.

VII

Not until all was over, and the troops had left Africa, and Marius was home again in Italy, did the truth begin to dawn slowly upon his intelligence. He knew that it was due to his management of the war that Jugurtha had been driven to take refuge with Bocchus. To him, Marius, was directly due the fact that Jugurtha was at the court of Bocchus at all. It was a bitter blow to find that the *optimates*, with one accord, joyfully ascribed to Sulla the capture of Jugurtha, and represented that Marius had wholly failed to keep his promise to capture Jugurtha and end the war.

Marius had a habit of estimating all things in the terms of the glory they reflected upon persons. He could hardly realize that he was in the midst of a political struggle in which very few

of the actors troubled much about his feelings. While he was fighting in Africa, the *optimates* had made a great effort to recover power. They had managed to get their own candidates elected for the consulship and they were glad enough to keep Marius in Africa out of the way. By the agency of the consul G. Servillus Cæpio they even managed to force through the Assembly a bill for removing the control of the courts from the *equites* and restoring it to the senate. They had eagerly seized upon the fact that Jugurtha had been surrendered into the hands of Sulla. Every straw which seemed to point in their favour was of value to them. For a time their effort seemed triumphant. It collapsed like a house of cards when Cæpio, having gone to Gaul to take up the command against the Cimbri, was completely defeated at Arausio with the loss of eighty thousand men.

The catastrophe of Arausio was one of the great Roman military disasters. To most Romans it revealed for the first time the terrifying magnitude of the Cimbrian threat. The united peoples of the Cimbri and Teutones comprised three hundred thousand fighting men—not Numidians or Mauretanians, but north Europeans who, man for man, had nothing to fear from a comparison with Roman troops.¹ The story of the Alia had gradually become only a legend to Romans. Here was the legend sprung to life again in deadly earnest—here were those tall fair men again, whom nothing could stop in their onslaught; here was someone worse than the Gallic Brennus, in the person of King Teutobochus, who could vault over six horses. If the dreadful disaster of Arausio was followed by no such immediate consequences as the Alia, it was due entirely to the inconsequent conduct of the Cimbri themselves, who took it into their heads to go to Spain instead of marching upon Rome. There was yet time to organize defence.

It was in its way a strange irony that the oligarchy, who had so wonderfully led united Italy against Pyrrhus and Hannibal,

¹ The importance of the part played in Roman history by the Cimbri and Teutones has always raised curiosity as to their identity. Who were they? Whence did they come? The Roman tradition was that they originally lived in Jutland and Slesvik-Holstein, from which they were driven by an invasion of the sea. If they marched up the Elbe valley, they would naturally reach Noreia, and the rest of the story is told above. They probably included tribes of both Celtic and Scandinavian descent. Their cultural development was much higher than that of the Germans.

should now falter and fail before the Cimbrian menace. Of their failure no one could reasonably doubt. As soon as the annual elections were held, their candidates were swept away by a vote so decisive that there could be no arguing with it. The coalition once more seized office.

If the problems and scandals connected with the African war had excited the electors, far more did those connected with the defeat of Arausio. Fortunately, the victims were fewer. It was on Cæpio chiefly that retribution fell. He was deposed from his proconsular office by vote of the Assembly – a startling extension of the doctrine of the 'Recall' – his property was confiscated and he was expelled from the senate. Even this was not enough. Lucius Saturninus and Gaius Norbanus pressed for a commission of enquiry, and only Cæpio's flight abroad saved his life. Meanwhile the electors remained quite uninfluenced by the attempts to steal away the credit due to Marius for the termination of the African war. It was Marius, not Sulla, whom they now demanded to save the country from the Cimbrian terror. The first consulship of Marius had been astonishing in its unusual features. His second consulship was still more startling. Not merely was the rough farmer of Arpinum again raised to the ivory chair so seldom achieved by men of his kind, but he was elected during his absence from Rome. Both the law demanding the personal presence of candidate and the law prohibiting re-election to the consulship were entirely ignored. The second seat went to Gaius Flavius Fimbria; and thus both consuls were men of the coalition. Marius, of course, was destined for Gaul.

The immediate result of all these events was to turn into a permanent change the revolution which Marius had carried through in the military organization of Rome. The old citizen army had perished for ever at Arausio. The new army had come to stay. It had saved the prestige of Rome in Africa; it might yet save her substance in Italy. The oligarchy had little for which to thank the wretched Cæpio.

Marius set to work at once to increase his forces and perfect their training. He had abolished the old armament and had re-armed the legions on one uniform system. The new legionary was a swordsman carrying an auxiliary javelin – the heavy pilum. Rutilius Rufus, during his consulship, engaged

the gladiatorial trainers as military instructors and taught the new men a hitherto unknown science of swordsmanship with the point. The old manipular system gave way to a new system by which three maniples (six centuries, now equivalent to 600 men) were grouped to form a larger unit called a cohort. Ten cohorts were brigaded to form the new legion, the outward sign of which was the new standard, the silver eagle – a standard destined to become the best known symbol of Rome. But deeper than all these technical changes went the moral change. Marius stamped the new armies with the ineffaceable mark of his own character. 'Marius's Mules' the world called them; men to whom no labour was too much and no difficulty too daunting. Marius laid the foundation of that Roman army which fought with the spade and the mattock as much as with the sword. No man ever impressed his own character on an institution more effectively than Marius impressed his upon the new Roman army. Every man in its ranks knew that he would never be asked to perform a task that his commander was unwilling to do himself. All the portraits of Marius have perished. But his likeness survives; the true portrait of Marius is the Roman soldier.

VIII

Besides his volunteers from the Roman and allied Italian citizens, Marius raised auxiliary troops from many sources. Among others, he is said to have applied to King Nicomedes of Bithynia, who returned the answer that most of his subjects had been taken by the slave-traders and could be found scattered through the Roman provinces. Marius stirred the senate to take action and a decree was accordingly issued declaring that no free citizen of a state allied with Rome could be a slave on Roman territory – and directing the magistrates to take cognizance. The prætor in Sicily had so many applications on the strength of this decree that he is said to have set free eight hundred persons in a few days – a curious illustration of the illegal oppression that must have been common under the oligarchy. Such excitement and upset was produced by these proceedings that it was necessary to stop them. The stoppage had effects as serious as the start. A number of slaves, believing themselves to be illegally detained, entered

into a conspiracy together. There were sporadic risings, which were repressed. Finally there was a great rising, the strength of which the authorities under-estimated. The troops sent to suppress it were defeated, their arms were seized by the rebels and in a short time the revolted slaves numbered six thousand men. They chose as their leader a man named Salvius, who was by original profession a clown. Under his organization they soon possessed an army of twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse—amateur soldiers, it is true—and laid siege to Morgantia, the strong city just at the foot of the hills south-west of Catana.

Salvius must have been a remarkable man. An attempt by the government to relieve Morgantia led to another military success by the slaves with the result that practically all the east of Sicily passed under their control. The revolt now spread to the west of the island where a Cilician named Athenion organized a similar rising. Lilybæum was besieged, and the whole of Sicily became the possession of the revolted slaves. Salvius crowned himself king under the name of Tryphon, and set up a regular government—a government of secession.

The one fixed point in a shifting world was Marius. He now stood between Rome and complete disaster. The coalition, with entire disregard of the law and custom of the constitution, elected him for his third consulship. Their faith was well grounded. The Cimbri, disappointed with Spain, poured back into Gaul and began to make serious preparations for an invasion of Italy. They established their headquarters in Northern Gaul. The Teutones, in overwhelming force, were to attack the western passes of the Alps. The Cimbri themselves, after a flanking march, were to force the eastern passes. The whole vast host would reunite on the banks of the Padus. . . . On this problem Marius concentrated his attention. The Sicilian revolt—serious though it might be—was of secondary importance.

If he failed now all was lost—the dominion of Rome would dissolve and Rome herself might disappear. The victory of the Cimbri would be the signal for chaos. The fourth consulship of Marius was therefore marked by a temporary truce between the parties and the election of Catulus, a member of

the *optimates*, as his colleague. Catulus took the army that defended the eastern passes of the Alps. He was none too reliable. Marius, marching the main army into Gaul, kept a doubtful and angry eye on the east.

The awful day, the testing day arrived. The tremendous hosts of the Teutones took the road past Arausio and the Durance valley to the route that led to Italy – Marius following carefully and watchfully with his legions. Near Aquæ Sextiæ at last his sharp eye saw the chance of fighting. A few days later the couriers were struggling into Rome with the greatest news the city had received since the battle of the Metaurus. Victory! – the utter destruction of the Teutones! The new armies had done their work. The terrible field of Aquæ Sextiæ was the first proof of their power.

Almost simultaneously the news came from Catulus that he had not had such success. The Cimbri had forced the eastern passes, crossed the Adige and gained the Padus valley. Disaster, as well as victory! The electors, torn between wild hope and wilder fear, elected Marius to his fifth consulship.

Marius paid a brief visit to Rome before he took up his new task against the Cimbri. He was now practically the uncrowned king of Rome; his authority was all-powerful and he stood alone above all his contemporaries. He had no axe to grind and no political aim to serve. The enthusiasm of his fellow-citizens was his exceeding sweet reward. Praise was all he cared for. It was arranged that his new colleague, M. Aquillius, should go to Sicily to deal with the slave-revolt while Catulus continued his command in the north. This settled, Marius left to join Catulus. The power, the safety, the existence, the future of Rome, still hung by a hair. She might yet prove to be only such a city as Persepolis.

IX

August came before Marius was ready. The defeated troops of Catulus had been re-drilled and re-trained into form. News from Sicily was reassuring. Aquillius fought a great pitched battle with the revolted slaves, himself leading his troops. The slave forces were dispersed and hunted down in detail. It was only a matter of time before the last fugitives were captured. . . . The delay to August was well-judged. Marius

was enabled to re-arm his troops with soft-headed pila, and with pila modified by the withdrawal of one of the fastening pins. The Cimbri hardly realized what an Italian summer might mean to men acclimatized to northern and central Europe.

The battle was fought near Vercellæ, on the Raudian plain, south of Novara, west of Milan. Marius took the offensive, dispersed and destroyed the Celtic cavalry on the right wing of the Cimbri and enveloped the host while Catulus attacked and held the centre. The soft-headed pila stuck in the Cimbrian shields and, bent and dragging in the dust, were terribly effective in breaking up their order. The summer sun completed the work. An overwhelming destruction fell upon the Cimbri. Their camp was stormed. Their wives, their children, their cattle, their treasure, all alike fell into the hands of the Romans.

A remnant of one thousand men, all that were left of the troops of King Tryphon, surrendered to the authorities in Sicily. The terms were that their lives should be spared. At Rome, however, they were condemned to fight with wild beasts in the arena. They refused; they agreed to die by one another's swords. Their leader, Satyrus, was the last to die. After seeing that all his friends were safe out of the hands of their foes, he killed himself and followed them.

X

Marius returned to Rome in the autumn after the battle of Vercellæ. Africa was quiet, Sicily pacified, the terror of the north had vanished. The storm cloud seemed to have dispersed. *But with it had gone the conditions which made Marius indispensable.* The coalition were hardly aware of the change. Marius was elected with enthusiasm to his sixth consulship. For four years he had been the ruler of Rome. Five years of continuous magistracy was something unknown to Roman tradition. He himself had sometimes been a little uneasy; but he found it difficult to deny the contention of his friends that his duty called him to the work.

He needed his sixth consulship in order to carry out certain promises to the troops. His plan was that army service should be a qualification for a grant of land on discharge. He did not propose to interfere with Italian land. The allotments would

be granted in the provinces, outside Italy. No distinction was to be made between Roman citizens and allies. The army service should be the qualification, just as the holding of a magistracy was the qualification for the senate.

Whether Marius grasped the revolutionary nature of this conception is highly doubtful. He may merely have intended to reward the soldiers who had saved Rome. But so remarkable were the means he proposed to employ and so many and so wide were the possibilities they contained, that the *optimates* could not sit down quietly under them. The elections were fiercely fought. Although the coalition was successful in securing office, and, under the guidance of the tribune L. Appuleius Saturninus, passed its measures through the Assembly, certain factors in the case now began to shake its power. One of them was the unconstitutional nature of the consulships of Marius. Saturninus provided for this by incorporating in his proposals a special oath which the senators were to take to maintain the new laws. The taking of this oath would be in effect an act of indemnity for any illegality that might reside in Marius' last consulship. The problem of this oath was used by the *optimates* to destroy the coalition.

Marius was a great soldier; but he was not a great politician. His attempt to justify the new legislation to the senate—especially the oath—was very unsatisfactory. Finally he himself seemed to become hopelessly confused on the point. He was understood to admit that senators ought not to take an oath to observe laws which were invalid and unconstitutional. When the oath was actually administered Marius took it with qualifications 'in as far as the laws might really be valid'—a proviso which wholly neutralized the value of the oath.

Most of the senators took the oath in this form. Metellus Numidicus alone refused to take any oath and was content to go into exile for conscience' sake.

The proviso which Marius introduced into the oath split the coalition and caused its downfall. His action utterly alienated Saturninus and the *popularcs*, while it evidently caused much mistrust of his judgment as a statesman among the *equites*. As Marius represented the common ground on which they agreed, this new turn of opinion meant a dissolution of the coalition,

The *populares* ran Glaucia as their candidate for the consulship and Saturninus for another term as tribune. But there was now no man upon whom the coalition could agree. The most desperate attempts were made to prevent the success of the *optimates*. A violent collision in the Forum took place, during which Saturninus was killed. The senate passed the Emergency Decree and gave it to Marius for execution. He induced Glaucia and the *populares* to place themselves in his hands. As soon as they had done so Glaucia was forcibly taken from his custody by certain unknown persons, and murdered.

The fall of Marius was complete. After five years of such absolute supremacy in Rome as no man had ever enjoyed before, power had slipped out of his hands and he passed into private life.

CHAPTER XIV

SULLA, THE ARISTOCRATIC DICTATOR

(100 B.C. – 78 B.C.)

I

How narrow the margin was that brought the oligarchy back to power, and the precise nature of the change, we can see from the events of the next few years. The *optimates* had recaptured both consulships – and for many years to come they kept them. Their supremacy in the electoral Assembly with its property qualifications and gradations of classes, was for the time being absolute. But they had nothing like the same power over the legislative Assembly which was organized upon a more democratic system. The legislative programme of Saturninus, destroyed the previous year by the clumsiness of Marius, was not only introduced afresh into the Assembly, but was passed. It contained, of course, the same provision for equality of treatment between Roman and Italian citizens in respect of the land allotments which the legislation of Saturninus had contained; and it was therefore annulled by the senate, and its sponsor called to account; but the fact that it could still command a majority in the legislative Assembly shows that the restored power of the oligarchy was not based upon a firm foundation of popular support. It depended upon the transference from the *popularis* to the *optimates* of a number of votes in the more highly qualified groups of the electoral Assembly; and these votes can only have been those of the equestrian class – the bankers and financiers. At any moment these votes might be lost again; and the history of the first ten years of the new dispensation shows the gradual dissolution of the temporary alliance between the senate and the *equites*.

After the fall of Marius the oligarchy was not quite what it had been. Its foes were stronger and more conscious of their power. It was itself anxious to amend its ways and be a better

government. The distinguishing note of the restoration was an attempt to revive some of the features of the old tradition – especially the patrician tradition. The men who set the tone of the oligarchy were very different in temper from Opimius and his friends. Such men as Q. Mucius Scævola, Publius Rutilius Rufus, M. Livius Drusus, Lucius Cornelius Sulla and Lucius Julius Cæsar, all of them made a genuine and honest attempt to maintain the oligarchy while remedying the abuses which had damaged its power and prestige. The brief period between the fall of Marius and the outbreak of the Social War saw an Indian summer of the senate – and the last crop of brilliant and original men who were ever to be devoted to the interests of the oligarchy.

As soon as the Cimbrian danger was over the attention of thinking men at Rome was attracted to Asia. The provinces had now had twenty years' trial of the Roman financial corporations who bought the taxes from the government and collected them under the scheme of Gaius Gracchus. Effective as the Gracchan scheme had been, considered as a method for controlling the power of the senate, it had, from other points of view, been an unmitigated curse to Asia. The worst of it was that the corporations could not be brought to book. The *equites* had control of the judicial courts, and most governors fought shy of challenging an investigation before them. Such investigations had a way of turning out badly for the governors. The problem was all the more urgent because Asia was now witnessing a revival of the native powers. King Mithradates of Pontus was building up an empire beyond the borders of the Roman province. He looked with interest upon the discontented Roman province of Asia. Its inhabitants looked with eagerness to him as to a deliverer.

Marius, on laying down his consulship, had set out for Asia to study the problem on the spot; and it is important for us to remember that he had personally surveyed the ground. The *optimates* hoped that it might be possible to avoid a war with Mithradates. If so, the system of administration in Asia must be improved.

It was for this purpose that Scævola was given the governorship of the province of Asia. He took with him Rutilius Rufus as assistant, and together the two men tried

the experiment of giving an example of really good government, a Reign of Law. The old Roman view of the subject had been that the details of the law mattered far less than a regular, fair and reliable administration of the law, whatsoever it chanced to be; and this was the principle put into force in Asia by Scævola and Rutilius Rufus. No consideration of personal profit and no fear of consequences were allowed to affect their policy. But the issue was no longer simple. Their experiment was not judged upon its merits. The spectre of Gaius Gracchus pursued all those who tried to ignore his work. The great difficulty which now lay in the path of the oligarchy was the control of the courts by the *equites*. Scævola left in Asia a name blessed by those whom he had ruled; but he had damaged the interests of the financial houses and had very seriously offended them. . . . So famous a jurist as Scævola was not the most promising target for reprisals in the courts and for the present he was left alone, but his successors did not dare to follow in his footsteps.

Either the oligarchy would fall or it must regain control of the courts. To deal with this problem was a task which fell to Scævola and Lucius Crassus during their consulship. They were two remarkable men. They made an attempt to stop all future proposals to expand or dilute the Roman 'nucleus' by a law which forbade any non-Roman to claim the franchise. The effect of this sweeping measure would have been to close the whole Roman body against any change or any new blood save for such additions as might voluntarily be co-opted by the Senate and People. This law had the approval of the *equites*, who could be relied upon to support its authors. At the same time a feeler was put out by means of an indictment levelled against Gaius Norbanus, the survivor of the two prosecutors who eight years before had taken the lead in driving Cæpio from Rome. The real cause of hatred against Cæpio then had not been the loss of the battle of Arausio, but the passage of the Servilian law which, for the time being, took the courts away from the *equites*. The condemnation of Norbanus now and the rehabilitation of Cæpio would clear the way for a new attempt to recapture the courts. But Norbanus was not condemned and Cæpio was not rehabilitated.

So much indeed to the contrary that the *equites* replied by

carrying the war into the enemy's camp. They left Scævola alone, but they caused Rutilius Rufus to be put on trial for misuse of his authority during Scævola's administration in Asia and they secured his condemnation. So startling and scandalous a perversion of justice produced an immediate reaction. Among the names of the successful candidates for the bench of tribunes next year was that of Marcus Livius Drusus. He was the son of the man who had taken so large a part in the overthrow of Gaius Gracchus. In character and temperament he had a good deal in common with his father; and he brought in a programme of legislation as astonishing and perplexing as his.

II

The design of Drusus was to wrest the courts away from the *equites* and to save the oligarchy by forming a coalition of parties against the equestrian order. For this purpose he proposed to conciliate the *populares* by a new Land Bill granting allotments in Italy itself and by a new Corn Dole. To prevent the *equites* afterwards wresting the courts back again, he proposed to grant Italians the franchise, relying on their gratitude to swamp the Roman equestrian vote. The scheme was a daring one. Would it succeed?

The wrestle over this legislation of Drusus was as exciting and as determined as any political contest in the history of Rome. The oligarchy itself was seriously divided. Timidity and prejudice made it hesitate. Drusus himself was a statesman of bolder stuff, willing to take risks. The rock on which he foundered was the Italian franchise. Drusus seems to have realized from his private knowledge of the Italian propaganda that the concession would have to be made sooner or later. The reasons were too good, the demand for it was too insistent to be refused. In that case, was it not the wisest plan to have the credit of freely giving it? . . . But Roman opinion was not yet educated to this point. Drusus got his proposals through the Assembly. When they reached the senate the *patres*, frightened at the outcry—especially the outcry from those equestrian votes that meant so much to them—declared the bills void.

They had cut their own throats! But worse was to come. Drusus himself was murdered by an unknown hand—generally

supposed to be that of Quintus Varius Hybrida, a fellow-tribune and a tool of the *equites*. The end of the Livian laws meant the end of the oligarchy; but the end of Livius Drusus meant the beginning of the Social War.

III

For now the cord of loyalty that held the allies to Rome, long stretched to breaking tension, snapped. At Asculum in Picenum there was an angry affray ending in the murder of a Roman magistrate and the slaughter of all Roman citizens in the neighbourhood. As soon as the news spread the Marsi rose; the Pæligni, Marrucini and Vestini followed; central Italy was in arms against Rome. From Samnium the revolt spread south. In a short time nothing was left to Rome save Etruria, Latium and part of Campania.

The revolt was thus twofold. It included a group of central Italian peoples who demanded the protective rights of Roman citizenship, and a group of south Italian peoples who were animated rather by a desire to destroy Rome. The confederates began by sending an embassy to Rome to point out their claims to the franchise. The senate refused to receive these deputies, save with an undertaking of unconditional submission. The allies therefore chose the town of Corfinium, named it Italica, and constituted all citizens of the allied communities citizens of this new Rome. A senate of five hundred members was created; two consuls (Q. Pompedius Silo, a Marsian, and C. Aponius Mutilus, a Samnite) were elected together with a board of twelve prætors. A coinage was issued. In fact, Italica became the confederate capital of Italy. The difference was that Italica was an artificial centre created for its own purposes by the circumference, but Rome was a natural centre which had created its circumference.

To slur over the social war would be fatally to distort the whole history of Rome. It meant to Italy what the war of secession meant to America. Yet it is not the details that we need linger over. The political results are the important matter.

The *equites* had succeeded in doing that which Pyrrhus and Hannibal had failed to do—they had wrecked the whole historic structure of Roman Italy. The Romans themselves

could not quite understand the nature of the disaster which had overtaken them. At first they concluded that they were the victims of a conspiracy—a view taken by the *equites*. A commission was set up with Q. Varius Hybrida at its head. Many persons were sent into exile on the suspicion that they had been in collusion with Drusus and a vast secret organization of Italians to conspire against the Roman people. At last it attacked even Marcus Scaurus, the aged chief of the senate, and a notorious sympathizer with Drusus. Old Scaurus grimly replied: 'Q. Varius, a Spaniard of Sucro, accuses M. Scaurus, *princeps senatus*, of having incited the allies to rebellion. Charge denied: witnesses, none. Romans—which will you believe?'¹ Q. Varius prudently hastened to withdraw all charges against him. The commission had overshot its mark.

IV

A year of the war gave pause to the Romans who had confidently plunged into the struggle. It seemed as if the reduction of Italy might occupy them as long as the several centuries it had originally taken. The revolt of the Italians brought vividly home to the Romans how indispensable to the working of the Roman military system were the men and officers of the allies, and how united and equalized together they all were in actual life and work. The realization of this truth went far to make the Romans conscious of the justification of the Italian claims. In addition, the discredit which fell upon the Varian commission allowed the voice of the senate once more to be heard. The oligarchy began to perceive that there was no essential antagonism between itself and the Italian claim to the franchise. If all Italians had the suffrage, all that would happen would be a vast increase in the potential vote that could be cast in the Assembly—a matter of indifference to the senate. Indeed, such an increase might place tactical advantages in its hands. If, on the contrary, the claims were resisted, much more serious modifications in the structure of the state might eventually be forced upon them. These, in fact, had been the reasons for the policy of Drusus.

¹ The reader with a taste for historical portraiture will find a magnificent rendering of the character of this interesting and typical old Roman in Mr. Greenidge's *History of Rome*, pp. 298–301.

The policy of Drusus thus began to make headway. Lucius Julius Caesar, the consul, towards the end of the year, took the lead by drafting and introducing a law giving the franchise to all Italians who had not revolted. The Varian commission was dissolved. A new one was formed which began its work by expelling Q. Varius from Rome. Before very long, public opinion had progressed. It was seen that a compromise was necessary also with the Italians who had revolted. Another bill was drafted, giving the franchise to all who surrendered within sixty days. The effect of these concessions rapidly became visible. So many surrenders took place that the only foes left in the field were the Samnites, who continued the war because they detested Rome, not because they wanted the Roman franchise. It was all the more necessary to finish the war because it was clear now that a war with Mithradates was impending. Such a double embarrassment might mean the dissolution of the Roman dominion.

Hence a special importance attached to the man who could pacify Samnium and the neighbouring Campania. The Roman commander in this section of the war was Lucius Cornelius Sulla.

V

We have met Sulla before. This is an opportunity of looking a little more closely at him. He was not a man given greatly to self-advertisement, and he was at this time less known probably than his importance might warrant; a quiet cultivated man, rather temperamental, a little cynical, somewhat conscious of the unusual personal appearance given him by a square head of thick fair hair, startling blue eyes, and the disfigurement of a birthmark. His importance, when he does come into the limelight, hints that he must have had an interesting previous history; and hints have survived concerning that history. He was the man whose coolness and diplomatic address obtained possession of the person of Jugurtha. He had been chief of staff to Catulus in the Cimbrian war. He had served with distinction as proprætor in Asia. He was not a great public speaker, and as a rule kept in the background. His work was done by private conversation and organization. But it is certainly a fact that he had a curious habit of being somewhere in the neighbourhood when great things were

happening. Lucius Cæsar had been in Sulla's company just before he returned to Rome to propose his law for the enfranchisement of the Italians.

Sulla had been connected with the new armies from their inception. No man can have been more continuously in touch with the recent developments in military science. It is altogether typical of the man that at this critical juncture he should calmly appear, with an air of being quite unconscious of anything remarkable, in charge of the Roman army most conveniently situated in relation to Asia. If his position was designed and worked for he certainly showed little outward sign of it.

A small group of generals emerged from the war with reputations maintained or increased – Sulla, Marius, Pompeius Strabo and Metellus Pius. The last was lacking in initiative. Pompeius was a man loathed by his troops. Marius was politically out of the running. Sulla's was the rising sun. It was the intention of his party to run him for the consulship and then to send him to deal with Mithradates. His qualifications were military efficiency, political soundness, and a thorough knowledge of the Greek language and Greek civilization. Mithradates had signalized his first year's presence in Roman Asia by organizing an immense pogrom of Italian-born persons. Eighty thousand Italians are said to have been massacred with all degrees of atrocity at his order. A complete resettlement and reorganization of the east might be called for. The *optimates* possessed no one more suitable than Sulla for a command in Greek lands.

Sulla was perfectly capable of the task. He was business-like, competent, and thorough. Anything beyond this had perhaps not yet transpired. He was certainly not thought of as a man capable of anything, or one whose sardonic logic might lead him to strange lengths. At the same time, it was possible that he might encounter serious opposition. His success in the east would mean, of course, the recovery for the senate of that military prestige which it had not enjoyed since the fall of Carthage. This the *equites* were determined to prevent. The political supremacy of the senate only too surely involved the transference of the courts once more from equestrian to senatorial jurors.

VI

The *equites* sought their instrument in a man who had all the qualifications they could desire. Publius Sulpicius Rufus was a brilliant orator and a fearless man; by repute he was of the *optimates* – at least he was the man who prosecuted Caius Norbanus a few years before – and he was heavily in debt. Now he turned suddenly from his old associations and his old views. He took up an attitude of violent opposition to the senate. Saturninus suddenly became his model; and as Saturninus had come to an unfortunate end, Sulpicius surrounded himself with a body-guard of six hundred *equites* – his anti-Senate, as he called it. The programme of legislation which he brought forward was very artfully designed to isolate and cripple the senate. By one measure every senator who was in debt above a very small minimum amount should be disqualified from sitting. By another, all political exiles were recalled. As most of them were probably in debt, this would conciliate the moderates without strengthening the senate. Finally, the franchise was given on equal terms to all Roman and allied citizens.

Nearly every ardent reformer since the days of Tiberius Gracchus had had a scheme for altering the constitution of the senate; but there can have been few schemes that would have destroyed it so effectually as this. The war, raging for two years throughout Italy, had brought about a state of things in which most large landowners must have found borrowing inevitable.

The alarm of the senate was calmed by the entry of Sulla upon the scene. The new consul was no orator as Sulpicius Rufus was, but he had courage, and above all he had clear vision and unhesitating decision. He blocked the action of Sulpicius by declaring a religious bar to the meeting of the Assembly. The platform was instantly rushed and the consul (for perhaps the first time in the history of Rome) was subjected to physical force. He was seized and carried off to the house of Marius close by. There, surrounded and helpless, he was ordered to revoke his declaration. He did so and was at once released. But Sulpicius had played into Sulla's hands by this violent action. The consul, after hastening home for

a wash and brush-up, set out for Campania and his army. Sulpicius had broken the laws and customs that protected the person of a consul – but he had set the consul free to hit back.

There was only one man who could be absolutely relied upon to deal with Sulla – and that was Marius. The enquiry of Sulpicius, whether Marius would accept the command against Mithradates, was answered with a joyful affirmative. Sulla's command was therefore annulled and Marius was nominated by vote of the Assembly. He had, however, no army. The only available army was Sulla's. Messages were at once sent to Campania, directing Sulla to hand over his legions to the new commander. Sulla must have been amused to receive the request. Very evidently Sulpicius and his friends had not realized the whole of the situation. They had not realized – or they had not believed it possible – that Sulla might employ his military force against them.

Sulla's march upon Rome was the logical outcome of the assault committed upon the person of a consul. Sulla made up his mind as he went. The reign of law was at an end. The purpose of the constitution was frustrated. It was no use pretending that the proceedings of Sulpicius were legal. He was using armed force, and passing decrees by an usurped jurisdiction; he was a revolutionary acting in defiance of the law. Sulla, as consul, had the legal right to use the forces of the state against him. By the time he neared Rome he had made up his mind. He would use the armed forces of the state. . . . The senate, panic-stricken, sent to stop him; but he continued his march. . . . Marius called for volunteers. It was too late. The Esquiline Gate was seized. Sulla himself directed the operations of firing the houses to drive the defenders off the roofs. Marius recognized that defence was impossible. He gave the word to scatter. Sulpicius was caught, but Marius got away. The head of Sulpicius was stuck up in the Forum for all men to see.

VII

Marius, on his escape from the city, hastened to his country home at Solonium and made preparations for flight. His friend, Numerius, made ready a ship at Ostia, and Marius put

to sea without waiting for the vessel to be properly provisioned for a voyage. A gale was blowing and he was no sailor. He was very anxious not to be landed at Tarracina, where a private enemy of his was in power; so finally the shipmen ran him in to shore at the promontory of Circeium, some way short of Tarracina. The conqueror of the Cimbri and Teutones spent the night in a wood, without food, drink or shelter. Next day he set out along the shore, encouraging his disheartened companions with his own courage, and telling them the story—possibly invented for the occasion—of the eagle's nest with seven eaglets in it, which as a boy he found in the hills. The augurs had predicted that this meant that seven times he should be the greatest man in the world; and Marius pointed out that he had only had six consulships yet! They must keep up their hearts for the seventh which was certain to come. He little knew what that seventh was going to be.

Forty miles or so they walked until they neared Minturnæ. There they saw a mounted patrol on the watch which proceeded to come to inspect them. They rushed down to the water-side and plunged in, making for two ships that lay in the offing. Marius was stout and ponderous and no longer young. It was a terrible job for two faithful servants to keep him afloat and get him on board. Even then he was not safe. The patrol rode into the water and ordered the shipmen to put Marius on shore or throw him out. There was a long consideration. Marius, with emotion, made an appeal to the masters, who finally decided not to give up the saviour of Italy. They landed him at the mouth of the Liris with exact instructions and a weather-forecast. In the marsh, some hours later, he was caught hiding by a patrol. Naked, and covered with mud, the victor of Aquæ Sextiæ was marched under arrest to Minturnæ. Here he was put into a room.

The magistrates and councillors of Minturnæ, like those of Hamelin, sat long in counsel. At length they decided that they would have to kill Marius. No citizen of Minturnæ would undertake the task, but a slave, an ex-Cimbrian knight, was found, who was prepared to do it. He went into the room with a sword. The room was dim, and there in the darkest part stood the naked and mud-covered Marius; but as the Cimbrian advanced, he saw two glittering eyes, like a lion's eyes, fixed

upon him, and the awful voice which had issued the commands at Vercellæ said to him: 'Man! do you dare to kill Gaius Marius?' Whereupon he dropped his sword and rushed out of the room, crying: 'I cannot kill Gaius Marius!'¹

The magistrates and councillors thought over this, and finally decided that they too could not kill the man who had saved Italy. 'Let him go,' they said, 'and the gods forgive us for putting him helpless and alone out of our city.' So they took him themselves and led him down to the sea. On the way they came to a sacred wood and began to make a detour round it. One of the elders said: 'No place is too sacred for Gaius Marius,' so they went straight through and saved some time. Having got a ship, Marius went to Ænaria, found his lost friends there, and after adventures and risks in Sicily, reached Africa. At Carthage he received a message from the governor (a stranger to him) forbidding him to land in Africa. Marius was a sensitive man and the idea that he of all men should be forbidden to land in Africa was too desolating for words. After a long pause, the messenger asked for an answer to take back. Marius' answer is one of the famous sayings of mankind. He answered, with a kind of embittered anguish: 'Say that you have seen Gaius Marius sitting among the ruins of Carthage.'

VIII

But strange and exciting news reached Marius in Africa. Sulla had made the perilous and heroic decision that he would run the risk of what might happen in Rome, and would go to Asia to deal with Mithradates. Any measures he took in these circumstances would probably be temporary; so he contented himself with a little patchwork. He presided over the consular elections before he went. The new consuls were Gnæus Octavius and Lucius Cornelius Cinna. Sulla was not quite satisfied with Cinna, but he could do nothing. The first thing was to dispose of Mithradates.

¹ Either the story of Marius is a tissue of fictions and folk tales put together for purposes of political propaganda or traces of his story can be found very widely spread. This particular incident turns up in the Icelandic Volsung Saga. His expedient of the javelins at the battle of Vercellæ has been told of Chaka, the famous Zulu chief. His letting his hair grow till his vow was accomplished is the familiar tale of Harold Fairhair.

Sulla, with his legions, disappeared over the water into Macedonia and for the time being Rome had nothing but not-very-exciting news.

Cinna and Octavius at once quarrelled. Octavius (a plebeian) was a man incapable of intelligent leadership – capable only of blind obedience to the letter of institutions whose spirit he was unable to appreciate. Cinna, a patrician (like Sulla himself) of the old Cornelian house, was an excellent leader but had no ideas of his own. He was just the man who would lend himself to carry out the ideas of others; and there were men in Rome who were eager to enlist his help.

Two years of war in Italy and the collapse of the province of Asia had created widespread distress. Neglect of this distress was spreading discontent further and further and deeper and deeper. The land-holders had suffered severely during the late war. The old oligarchy was badly crippled. The war in Asia had very seriously damaged the bankers and financiers. Sulla's policy was known, or guessed. It included the revocation of the Gracchan laws – the transference of the courts back to the senate and the abolition of the tax-farming system in Asia. To avoid these consequences, the *equites* made a fresh attempt in Sulla's absence to reach a permanent settlement, preserving the Gracchan laws, while Sulla was unable to prevent it.

Cinna was perfectly ready to take up the case of the new Italian voters. They had not been properly treated. Their votes ought not to be confined to four special new Wards which voted last of all. The new electors should be distributed with fairness through the old Wards. . . . This was a bid for the support of the new voters in maintaining the Gracchan legislation.

On the day when the assembly voted on this proposal the supporters of Octavius and the Old Franchise made an armed attack on Cinna and the supporters of the New. Cinna was driven from the city. The senate thereupon passed a resolution deposing Cinna from the consulship, and appointing L. Cornelius Merula in his place. Cinna was not likely to take this remarkable action without protest. The senate had no right either to elect or depose a consul. He retired to Capua and threw himself upon the mercy of the legions stationed there. They

heard his case, sympathized with his protest, and promised their support.

This news determined Marius to return to Italy. With some Mauretanian cavalry and the Italian refugees – less than a thousand men altogether – he landed at Telamon in Etruria, and began to enrol recruits. He at once sent a message to Cinna acknowledging him as the rightful consul; an action which drew from Cinna a warm response. But the Marius who had come back was not the Marius who had gone. That former Marius had left the fragments of his soul in the ship off Circeium, in the marshes of the Liris, and in the dark room at Minturnæ. The new Marius had not cut his hair since the day he left Rome. He firmly, with sinister irony, put aside the proconsular title and the fasces with which Cinna welcomed the man who had been six times consul. Not for such things had he come back to Italy! On foot, with disordered clothes and tangled hair, gloomy looks on his brow, dark thoughts in his mind, and a chosen assortment of men like himself around him, the saviour of Italy returned to her, looking for the men who had persecuted the victor of Vercellæ and the hero of Aquæ Sextiæ.

Blockaded by land and sea, her people dying of hunger and pestilence, her leaders at odds, Rome could only capitulate. Cinna enquired whether they surrendered to the rightful consul or to a private individual. The envoys did not know, and were sent back to ask. After long consideration the senate were still unwilling to forsake Merula; but when he voluntarily resigned office, they felt free to acknowledge Cinna. The only condition they stipulated for was that no citizen should lose his life. Cinna declined to swear any such oath; he would promise only that no citizen should suffer without his knowledge or consent – an undertaking difficult to keep. Marius stood by and said nothing.

When they came to the gates of the city Marius paused upon the threshold. The man who had rescued Rome from the Cimbri and Teutones was (he reminded them) an exile, banished by law from the city which once he had saved.

If they wanted him, they must cancel the decree of banishment. The assembly was hurriedly convoked and the decree cancelled. After the entry of Marius the gates were shut.

Then the reign of terror began. Octavius was slain on his own tribunal; Cornelius Merula and Catulus were allowed to commit suicide; Lucius and Gaius Julius Cæsar were murdered. Marcus Antonius, run to earth by a party of assassins, held them charmed and open-mouthed by his wonderful pleading for his life, until the officer below, unable to comprehend the long delay, rushed upstairs and himself killed Antonius. The fury of Marius shocked his friends; but they could not restrain him. He lived just long enough to enjoy a few days of his seventh consulship. He was worn out with his hardships and the turmoil of his own mind. He suffered from insomnia and depression of spirits. He had been drinking heavily; he caught a chill and died of pleurisy on the thirteenth day of January in the year 86 B.C. He was seventy years old. His place as consul was taken by L. Valerius Flaccus.

The reign of terror ceased as soon as Marius was dead. Complete triumph seemed to have attended the coalition. The whole of Italy lay in the hands of Cinna.

IX

The weakness of Cinna was that he had no positive policy. Having done certain things which his equestrian friends and allies wished him to do, he had nothing more to occupy his mind. Hardly any man—not even Marius himself—had enjoyed so complete a supremacy as Cinna; hardly any man proved quite so lacking in initiative as he.

For three years he succeeded automatically to the consulship, nominating his colleague without consulting the electoral assembly. He held the consulship, indeed, for the rest of his life. It was not his fault that his life lasted so short a time. He was even more completely the monarch of Rome than Marius ever had been; far more so in some ways than Augustus ever was to be.

The only step he took to safeguard the future was to send L. Valerius Flaccus to Asia.

When Sulla started for the east, his mission had seemed so very unlikely to succeed that his political opponents had not troubled their heads very seriously about him. But Sulla had set about his task with a discernment which proved him to be a remarkable man. To finance his campaign he began by

seizing the treasures of the richly endowed temples of Greece – some of which also acted as deposit banks. He had wrested Athens from the generals of Mithradates, and, using the mountains of central Greece as a natural entrenchment, he smashed at Chæronea and Orchomenos two vastly superior armies which Mithradates sent against him. He had proved himself a past master at the new art of war introduced by Marius.

The news of the capture of Athens was enough to warn Cinna that Sulla must not be left entirely alone. Whether Marius left any instructions concerning the strategy of an eastern campaign is not known; but it is fair to presume that the remarkable plan carried out by Flaccus, and after his death by his subordinate Fimbria, was that of Marius. They struck across the straits and into Asia Minor from the north, threatening the communications of Mithradates. Fimbria won a great battle, besieged Mithradates in Pergamus, and nearly captured him. Caught between Sulla and Fimbria, Mithradates decided to make terms with Sulla. The choice was a wise one from every point of view. He could rely upon Sulla's word and upon his sense of responsibility. In Fimbria, he could put no such trust. The action of Mithradates in meeting Sulla and entering into a formal treaty with him as the official representative of the Roman state, went far to persuade the Roman world that Sulla's consistent claim to this status was justified.

What followed was noteworthy. As soon as the treaty was concluded Sulla crossed into Asia and encamped quite close to Fimbria. Now, on the first entry of Flaccus and Fimbria into Macedonia, they had paid Sulla a visit, and for a time the camps were near to one another. The object of the visit did not transpire, for almost at once it became clear that the men of Flaccus's army were steadily melting away into Sulla's camp. Flaccus struck camp and moved out of the danger zone. On this second juxtaposition of the two camps exactly the same thing began to happen. By some extraordinary attraction the men of Fimbria began to desert. He made an appeal to them; in vain. He tried to assassinate Sulla; in vain. He tried to get an interview with Sulla; but he had forfeited his right to that. Last of all, in desperation, he killed himself; and the whole of his army was absorbed into Sulla's.

Sulla was now completely master of the eastern provinces.

His plan was to make a temporary settlement of Asia, equip himself with the necessary supplies for a war, and return to Rome. Intricate though his calculations had been, they were being justified by events. He had reckoned that, once the Social War was decided, the danger-spot was no longer in Italy at all, but in Asia. If the Roman dominion in Asia fell, all would fall; if it held, all would hold. He had contrived that it should hold. Now he meant to reconquer Rome from his eastern base. His prestige already stood higher than that of the government at Rome.

He spent a winter in preparation. At a general conference at Ephesus he addressed the assembled delegates of the Asiatic cities. After reminding them of the generous policy of the senatorial government to the provinces, Sulla remarked that their readiness to welcome Mithradates and to carry out his murderous orders, had recoiled upon their own heads. The government of Mithradates had been their just punishment. He would not emulate the barbarous conduct of Mithradates – but some penalty they deserved. He therefore fined them five years' taxes, to be paid at once.

The cities of Asia were obliged to borrow to pay this fine. They mortgaged their public buildings wholesale as security for the loans they found it necessary to raise. Not only did the money finance the coming war, but it acted as a lever upon the Roman bankers, who were the only men capable of advancing the loans required. The failure of Sulla in the coming war would almost certainly mean the whole or partial repudiation of the debt he was incurring. The government at Rome had already authorised the repudiation of three-quarters of all debts. By Sulla's action the support of the *equites* was largely detached from the government at Rome.

Meanwhile, Sulla wrote to the senate. He reported his actions and observed that in return for his services to the state he had been declared an enemy of his country, his house had been destroyed, his wife and children chased from Rome, and his friends persecuted. He proposed shortly to return; but he undertook to punish only the guilty persons. To the ordinary citizen, new as well as old, he undertook to do no injury.

The senate tried to arbitrate and asked the consuls to suspend their military preparations. They did not do so. There were

some differences of opinion. The consuls wished to make sure of the loyalty of the Italian cities by taking hostages from them. This the senate opposed. Cinna was anxious to fight the war abroad. His troops did not want to go and killed him in a sudden mutiny. Carbo was left sole consul. Sulla's reply to the senate was that he would never himself be reconciled with the men who had recently governed Rome; but he would submit to the authority of the senate if the refugees and exiles in his camp, driven from Rome by Marius and Cinna, were restored. Here Carbo intervened, and declined to agree in the restoration of the exiles. The negotiations therefore dropped and the issue was fought out.

X

Early in the year 85 B.C., Sulla arrived at Dyrrachium. Before sailing for Italy, the whole army subscribed to an oath which constituted their solemn political creed. They undertook not to disperse on touching Italian soil; to do no injury to Italy, and to recognize the rights of the new Italian citizens. Sulla offered a complete amnesty to all who surrendered to him. When he entered the port of Brundisium, no opposition was offered. There was, in fact, no adequately organized defence of Italy. The vast preparations made by the government were never employed at all. He was at once joined by all the ablest soldiers of Italy—Metellus Pius; Marcus Crassus, an organizer of genius; and Gnæus Pompeius, the handsome, popular and clever son of the hated Strabo.

Sulla crossed Samnium before he found an army facing him. Gaius Norbanus, with the advance guard of the consular army, was at Capua. Lucius Scipio, with the main body, had not yet arrived. Sulla instantly dispersed the army of Norbanus, and, advancing to Teanum, entered into negotiations with Scipio. Before the negotiations were concluded, the army of Scipio had melted away and had joined Sulla.

The peaceful absorption of this second army by Sulla shows that public opinion was very far from being generally on the side of the *populares*. Something else also is implied. It is now that we first hear of a type of proceeding which becomes gradually more common, until under Cæsar and his successors it becomes a matter of course—the corporate action of the

army. The army which Sulla commanded in Samnium – like the army of Catulus before it – was obviously a singularly intelligent and articulate body, capable of forming opinions and taking action. The whole story of Sulla shows us that his armies were the first to display these characteristics in a decided form. The inference that he taught the men under him a certain habit of corporate life and organization is irresistible.¹ He himself was a man usually much more at home in the committee meeting than in the public assembly. Before the end of the Social War the habit had spread. The league of veterans was dominant in all the armies that dated from that period: and they were all for Sulla. The consuls were driven to rely upon new-raised troops.

The second Italian campaign of Sulla was thus fought by his veteran troops against bodies of volunteers and conscripts whose training was very superficial. While Metellus Pius and Gnæus Pompeius advanced northward along the eastern coast of the peninsula, and Crassus held central Italy, Sulla himself marched upon Rome. The battle of Sacriportus drove the leaders of the *populares* into Præneste, and opened the road to Rome. Sulla reached the city and cut off and blockaded Præneste. All the efforts of Carbo to relieve Præneste completely failed. The whole resources of Italy, including a force of seventy thousand Samnites, were unsuccessful. When it became clear that Præneste could not be saved by ordinary measures, Pontius Telcinius, the Samnite commander, determined to throw himself upon Rome. Giving Sulla the slip by night, he reached Rome before he could be caught.

The fate of Rome seemed certain; but the strength of a chain is in its weakest link, and the weakest link in Rome was strong. A scratch collection of persons unfit to bear arms was hastily got together. This valiant army (which deserves a high place among the famous armies of Rome) held the Samnites just long enough for Sulla to overtake them. Outside the walls of Rome a decisive battle, which lasted the whole night through, was fought. The Samnite army was the only highly-trained body of men on the side of the *populares*, and in this crisis it broke

¹ This is supported by certain hints, e.g. Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, xi. The Roman army always had possessed a certain corporate life; but this is the point at which it becomes much more marked and definite.

Sulla's hitherto undefeated veterans, but was itself taken in flank and driven back upon the Tiber by the army of Crassus. Pontius Telesinus ('looking more like the victor than the vanquished') was among the slain. Sulla himself was almost incredulous to find himself triumphant, with three thousand prisoners in his hands.

Præneste surrendered, and with it fell the power of the *populares*. Some of the great fortresses of Italy held out—Volaterræ for three years, Nola for two—but from this time forward the party of the Gracchi, of Saturninus and of Marius was a party of exiles and fugitives.

XI

Few men have ever faced a more complete break-down in the political mechanism of civilization than did Sulla, after the fall of Præneste. The only thing that had survived was the power of leadership—as exemplified in himself. For years now the system of constitutional government had been slipping down the slope. It had grown less and less a reality. The real work had been done by personal rulers—by Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, by Marius, Cinna, and now himself, Sulla. . . . But Sulla seems to have had views of his own. To judge by his actions he believed that there was no constitutional break-down in the proper sense of the words. What had really happened was a deadlock—a jamming of the machinery. This was a totally different thing. If it was not possible to get rid of the deadlock by agreement it might be possible to do so by force—that is to say, by the action of a single undivided will.

His wish was to get the central machinery of the state going again. The Italian franchise he did not object to and had sworn to preserve. The senate, which once had been so mighty, was now a meek and amenable thing. Sulla wrote to remind it that as the higher magistrates were dead and the time of election was approaching, an interrex ought to be appointed. The senate named L. Valerius Flaccus. Sulla then suggested to Flaccus that he should nominate a Dictator without fixed term of office for the reconstitution of the state; and mentioned himself as a deserving candidate. Flaccus therefore brought a bill before the Assembly. The terms of the law were most remarkable. They indemnified the new dictator against all

acts hitherto done or to be done in the future. They gave him power as absolute as could be placed in the hands of any human being.

Armed with this power, Sulla proceeded to break the deadlock and set the machinery free to move.

He approached this problem with a freedom from prepossessions which startled his own age nearly as much as it would startle ours. As the deadlock was due to the action of certain persons from the days of Tiberius Gracchus onwards, who insisted on having their own way or wrecking the machine, he began by clearing away the undesirable persons, and by putting it beyond the power of any one to wreck the machine. The leaders of his own party intervened at this point and insisted upon the names being put down in writing. Sulla therefore, with perfect candour, drew up the official Proscription Lists. These were published in the Forum, together with the dictatorial decree. Forty senators and one thousand six hundred *equites*¹ were outlawed, a reward was offered for their heads; severe penalties were laid down for any one harbouring them; their property was confiscated and their children and grandchildren excluded from Roman citizenship. This proscription was put into operation. The price of real estate naturally fell very low through the numbers of confiscated estates thrown upon the market. The impoverished refugees bought these up—Sulla himself setting the example.

The next step was to get rid of the powers which had rendered possible the wrecking of the machine. Sulla removed the tribunes' right of introducing bills into the Assembly without the prior assent of the senate. He reduced the tribunician power once more to its old original veto against magisterial action. The right of addressing the Assembly was limited. A tribune in future, under the new arrangements, could never be elected to any other office. To safeguard the

¹ Senators	40	
<i>Equites</i>	1600	
Samnites	3000	
	<hr/>	
	4640	
Other military executions	60 ?	{ Would yield the figure given by Valerius Maximus.
(number not given)	<hr/>	
	4700	

oligarchic 'nucleus' he took the courts away from the *equites* and restored them to the senate; he abolished the tax-farming system of Gaius Gracchus. He drew up a complete scheme of magistracies and pro-magistracies to suit the growing empire of Rome. He enlarged the senate to the number of six hundred; he abolished the censors, and caused entrance to the senate to depend upon election to a magistracy. Finally, as a precaution against the popular discontent which had already once endangered the oligarchy, he confiscated the land of the communities which had sided against him and granted it in allotments to his troops on demobilization.

Sulla's conception of what he was doing was, in general effect, that he was cancelling the work of Gaius Gracchus and preventing the possibility of its repetition. This view was shared by his friends and supporters. The senate, after the death of Tiberius Gracchus, had issued a set of coins in commemoration of the occasion. These were now re-issued as if in final confirmation of the triumph of the senate.¹ When, after two years spent in his work of reorganization, Sulla resigned and retired to his Campanian villa, the famous Opimian vintage, the wine of the year when Gaius Gracchus fell, was served at the parting banquet.

He was fifty-nine years old when he gave up his dictatorship and retired, still a puzzling and enigmatic figure, from the world. For a year he hunted, he wrote, he entertained his friends – more often now his real friends, amusing and interesting persons of the professional stage, than his important and less amusing political allies. When he broke a blood-vessel and died, at the age of sixty, he bequeathed to posterity a character which no one has ever been able to fathom, and a reputation which every one has agreed to condemn.

Posterity has seen him only through the distorting glass provided by his political enemies; it has seen him not as the protagonist of a great political idea, but as the author of the thousand abuses and scandals which his followers introduced into his procedure; most of which he never heard of and could not help. The scandals of the Sullan proscription are well known. Not so well known are the things which made his

¹ H. Mattingly, *Some Historical Coins of the late Republic*, J. R. S., XII (1922), pp. 236–239. *Numismatic Chronicle*, ser. V, vol. VI (1926), p. 243.

career an epoch – his organization of the army, his legislation, his deep interest in art and letters, his building activity.¹ He was the man who, when such a storm passed across the Roman world as seemed to shake it utterly into ruin, decided that it should be re-made, and set it spinning in a fresh orbit to carry far into the future the great political invention of the nucleate state.

XII

So after the death of Sulla befell a pause. Deep and passionate discontents disturbed the Italy which Sulla left behind him; but for the time there was peace and slow recovery. The future would depend upon the wisdom and political capacity of the senate, as Sulla had reconstituted it.

¹ His building activity is least known of all. See *The Sullan Forum*, by Esther Boise Van Deman, *J. R. S.*, XII (1922).

CHAPTER XV

POMPEIUS, THE OLIGARCHIC DICTATOR (78 B.C.—52 B.C.)

I

Sulla's constitution did not last ten years after his death. Was something wrong with his diagnosis? All the difficulties had been cleared out of the way of the oligarchy; power, such as in the old days of its greatness it hardly possessed, had been put into its hands; and yet it seemed strangely feeble, as if heart and passion were now lacking to it. Powerful protectors guarded it. When, immediately upon the death of Sulla, the consul Lepidus tried to upset the settlement, Pompeius intervened. There had been a time when the majestic authority of a consul towered above the power of puny individual men. But times had changed. Pompeius was much more important than any consul. He was the popular chief of the army.

The oligarchy could not bring itself to love the handsome and popular Pompeius, any more than it had loved the plain and popular Marius. But although it detested the military idol, it needed him, and was compelled to use him; and as long as it needed him, he was powerful. No sooner was Lepidus out of the way, than the problem of Sertorius became pressing. That brilliant member of the *populares* still maintained himself in Spain, and proved far too much for a conventional general like Metellus Pius. It was necessary to send Pompeius, and to keep him at the head of an army.

Other problems harassed the oligarchy. Asia was still unsettled. The Mithradatic war began again. Lucius Lucullus, Sulla's friend and the executor of his will, was sent to deal with it. Hardly had Lucullus disappeared over the sea, when Italy itself, only slowly and painfully recovering from the wounds of the Social and Civil wars, was convulsed by the war of Spartacus. Some gladiators broke out of the gladiatorial school at Capua,

gathered to themselves others of like mood, and defeated all attempts at recapture. This was no case of King Eunus the cheap jack, or King Tryphon the ex-clown. The gladiators were men of fighting races—Thracians, Germans and Gauls—their leader was a Thracian named Spartacus, and the inner circle were all of them professional experts in the use of weapons. Spartacus was a soldier of genius, who was never defeated till the day when he fell. He was soon at the head of forty thousand men. Cities were stormed and sacked. When both consuls were sent against him, he defeated them both. It was necessary for the senate to appoint a special commander. The man chosen was Marcus Crassus.

In a series of great battles, Crassus wore down the power of Spartacus. The great slave-leader died in battle in Lucania, after having for two years defied the power of Rome. Even so, Crassus could not capture all his followers, who were only finally destroyed by the return of Pompeius from Spain. Pompeius intercepted the fugitives and ended the war.

The destruction caused by the slave revolt and the extraordinary incapacity on the part of the oligarchy which it revealed, were such that Crassus and Pompeius began to be influenced against the senatorial government. The Sullan system was not working well. Pompeius, too, was conscious of the undertone of hostility towards himself that he perceived in the senate. He realized that if he depended upon the oligarchy for favour he would wait, like Marius, in vain. His best course would be to make friends with the crushed and weakened, but by no means destroyed, opposition. The vote of the Assembly would be at the disposal of the man who restored its powers. . . . Pompeius had already shown good will. He had deliberately burnt the correspondence of Sertorius unread, lest he should find that it implicated any Roman citizen. Some one was grateful. . . . Some hidden controlling hand—publicity was still dangerous—guided the negotiations. Pompeius received the promise of a Triumph (to which he was not legally entitled) and the consulship (for which he was disqualified by youth) and land allotments for his troops (which would confirm his hold over them and their votes). The position of Crassus was more peculiar. When the Sullan proscriptions and confiscations broke the real estate market,

and sent prices down almost to nothing, Crassus had seen his way and had bought freely. The subsequent rise in values made him a millionaire. He had begun to dominate the financial world like a Morgan or a Rothschild. Money and organization were his especial province. He was already the man who swayed the votes of the higher groups of the equestrian order, the bankers and financiers. If he could be induced now to co-operate with Pompeius, the old Gracchan coalition became again perfectly possible. Hence Crassus also received promise of the consulship, and certain undertakings the nature of which appeared later. The coalition was formed: the consuls were elected: and the price was paid. The price was the abolition of Sulla's constitution, the restoration of full powers to the tribunes, the return of the juries to the *equites*,¹ and the re-establishment of the tax-farming system in Asia. It was a triumphant stroke of political diplomacy. . . . On this smooth and peaceful revolution the oligarchy supinely looked, without resistance. The troops of Pompeius and the money and influence of Crassus were restraints which kept them quiet.

II

Perhaps another thing also kept them quiet – and that was the famous trial of Verres this year for his conduct during his governorship of Sicily. The revelations made in this trial, concerning the misdeeds which the senatorial government was condoning, must be read in detail. With Verres in Sicily, Spartacus in Italy, Mithradates in Asia, and Sertorius in Spain, the oligarchy stood condemned on every count which it is possible to bring against a government. . . . If this was the core round which the Roman world was made, the sooner the world lost the privilege of being ruled by one of the worst governments it had ever seen, the better. Such sentiments swayed public opinion. These evils were far from exhausting the list. The Cilician pirates had spread and increased during the years of war and disorder. With the return of peace very little had been done to reduce their activity. Their raids now spread all over the Mediterranean. They formed a great

¹ The Lex Aurelia formed the jury panels from Senators, *Equites*, and Tribuni *Ærarii*; but as the last named (compare footnote, p. 25 above) were of equestrian class the change was all to the benefit of the *equites*, and restored a large part of their power.

combination or trust, much like the modern bootleggers, but with robbery and slave-trading as their staples. Even Roman citizens who fell into their hands were no longer safe. Their serious mistake was to interfere with the corn-supply of Rome. The soaring price of corn brought the facts home to the Roman elector as nothing else had done.

With the revival of the tribuneship and the recapture of the courts, the *populares* were now rapidly regaining ground. Two years after the change a significant figure stepped for the first time upon the public stage. At the age of thirty-four Gaius Julius Cæsar was elected quæstor. He was not an unknown man. He was the nephew of Marius; he had married Cinna's daughter; he had firmly refused the overtures of Sulla, and had narrowly escaped suffering in the proscription. He was a very cool, a very acute, a serious and courageous man, with an extraordinary talent for social life. A kind of intuitive sympathy kept him continually in touch with all the changes of thought and feeling in those about him; his own care in dress, his beautiful speech and perfect manners were part of a delicate tact which sought to avoid anything that would come between him and others. Nearly all his life he lived in a crowd, and found the medium quite natural to him. He never seems to have suffered that weariness of one's fellows, that longing for solitude, which drives some men to the desert or the monastic cell. In him bubbled an apparently inexhaustible well of thought and conversation. He spent his whole life in talking to other men, persuading them, influencing them, inducing them. He was 'adapted' to a densely social environment. There was never anything inspired about him, never anything mystical or suggestive of powers and virtues beyond this world. He was the marvellous product of natural social evolution.

How infallible his instinct was for the wind of popular opinion he showed this year when his aunt Julia, the widow of Gaius Marius, died. It was the Roman custom to exhibit the ancestral portraits and to deliver a commemorative address upon the virtues of the deceased. The sensational news rapidly spread, that Cæsar was actually showing the image of Marius, now these many years withdrawn from publicity. Men rushed to see. It was indeed true! The sight moved his audience to various emotions. There were half-hearted

protests, but there was far more deeply felt applause and enthusiasm. Cæsar's courage, and his determination to be free in his own thoughts and views, formed an example which lesser men were glad to follow. A bond was snapped, a chain broken from the minds of Romans.

All this meant a stirring and awakening of the *populares*. There was swift action to remedy the rising price of corn. A soldier was wanted. A soldier implied Pompeius. And at this moment a number of considerations converged to produce a situation in which it became possible to give Pompeius the task, and at the same time to use him as a counterweight to balance the power of the oligarchy.

III

Lucullus had by this time been eight years in Asia – and the story of his rule there is a key to much subsequent history. He had arrived in Asia to find Mithradates, with huge and well-equipped armies, fighting upon the *Ægean* seaboard and well on the way to make himself master of the straits and the land-route into Europe. One season's campaign had been enough to make the Pontic king's position untenable. Lucullus pursued him the long journey into Pontus, caught, held, and broke the king's armies, and chased him a fugitive into Armenia. Lucullus then spent two years in settling Asia: very momentous years, the years 71 and 70 B.C., when the coalition of Pompeius and Crassus was being organized at Rome, and when Verres was being impeached and tried.

No irony could be more stinging than that while the senate was being disgraced by the exposure of the crimes of Verres in Sicily, the very different conduct of Lucullus in Asia should be no less a source of weakness to it. Lucullus found the province in a serious condition. He had been present when Sulla fined the cities five years' taxation. He found that to raise this sum they had not only mortgaged their municipal property, but had suffered illegal oppressions at the hands of their creditors, who had attempted to enforce payment of exorbitant interest. Twenty thousand talents had swelled in thirteen years to a hundred and twenty thousand. The action of Lucullus was drastic. He cut interest down to the recognized market rate

of twelve per cent. per annum. Where the interest that had already been paid exceeded the principal, he terminated the debt as discharged. His plan was to set aside a quarter of a debtor's income for the repayment of debt. Compound interest he disallowed. The result was that in four years the debt was paid off. His name was blessed in Asia: but he made implacable foes of the Roman financial class, whose profits he had docked. It was to this very class that the action of Pompeius and Crassus now again handed over the collection of the Asiatic taxes.

From this moment the *equites* wanted Lucullus out of Asia. At first they had no very good excuse for interfering with him. His advance into Armenia, his wonderful victory at Tigranocerta, and his capture of the city with its vast treasures, were a romance worthy of the 'Arabian Nights.' It was the plunder of Tigranocerta that made the later wealth of Lucullus the proverb which it remains to this very day. But they secured that he should be relieved of his civil responsibilities. His failure to capture Artaxata shook his power. Secret emissaries from Rome stirred up trouble in his army. During the absence of Lucullus in Armenia, Mithradates won victories in Pontus which compelled him to retreat. His enemies seized the chance. Had he been victorious at Artaxata history would have been different. As it was, his lack of success gave the opening required by the political strategists at home.

The tribune Gabinius introduced a series of bills into the Assembly—the first product of the new era of tribunician authority. By special enactment Lucullus was superseded and his command given to the consul Manius Acilius Glabrio. The discharge of the time-expired troops in Asia was ordered. An extraordinary command was given to Pompeius for the purpose of repressing piracy. For three years to come he was given control of the whole sea, and of the land for fifty miles inland: he was empowered to raise an army and a fleet, and he was given the power of appointing twenty-five assistants of Prætorian rank. At one stroke such power was vested in Pompeius as no Roman before him had possessed.

But the *equites* did not want Glabrio in Asia. They wanted Pompeius. By the Manilian law, a year later, the Assembly transferred the Asiatic command from Glabrio to Pompeius.

PLATE III



Gaius Julius CÆSAR
(Consul and Dictator)



Gnaeus POMPEIUS
Magnus
(Sole Consul)



Vercingetorix
(Chief of the Arverni ;
War Chief of the Gauls)



Marcus ANTONIUS
(Triumvir)

(From Coins in the British Museum)

The senate made but a feeble resistance. Pompeius, however, was warned. 'If you make yourself like Romulus, you will hardly escape his fate'—a covert threat which provoked a popular demonstration in favour of Pompeius. Quintus Catulus said, with too elaborate irony: 'Pompeius is far, far too precious to endanger. If we lost him, who would be left?' The Assembly roared 'You!'—and Catulus sat down. The electorate was with Pompeius.

IV

The Roman elector could have had no more perfect illustration of the difference between bad and good government than to witness the speed with which Pompeius acted, and the efficiency of his organization. It took him only a few months to sweep piracy off the seas. Leaving his assistants to finish the work, he himself went to Asia. His meeting with Lucullus was stormy—but that was to be expected. He scornfully declared the victories of Lucullus to be tinsel victories. Lucullus bitterly replied that all his life Pompeius had been collecting other people's laurels. On the whole, Lucullus had the better of the exchanges. There was enough truth in his remarks to make them very galling.

Pompeius destroyed the power of Mithradates in a single great campaign, and next year pursued him to his retreat in Colchis. Pompeius was the first Roman to penetrate so far into the almost mythical lands of further Asia—Iberia, Albania and the high Caucasus. At home they heard with awe that Amazons had fought against Pompeius on the banks of the river Abas—a river for which Romans probably searched in vain on the maps available to them. He seemed, like Alexander, to have the gift of appearing godlike and romantic in all men's eyes.

Mithradates, driven into the great wilds, at last committed suicide. Tigranes, the proud sultan of Armenia, who had complained because Lucullus did not address him as 'King of Kings,' made a humble surrender to Pompeius, laying his crown at Pompeius' feet. It was the kind of luck Pompeius had. Even his enemies were impressed to hear of the simple and kindly dignity with which he moved amid the wonders of the golden east, and the miraculous ease with which he made

houris smile, and kings bow before the might of a plain Roman consular.

It took Pompeius longer to settle Asia than to conquer her. His measures of pacification and reorganization remained the basis of the subsequent history of Asia Minor. He spent three years in dealing with Syria, Palestine, the Arabian border, and the whole of the eastern lands between Egypt and the Black Sea. He founded cities and everywhere did his best to preserve and encourage the economic life of the east. It is not easy to decide how much of the subsequent prosperity of Asia was due to him, and how much to Lucullus. There was deadly truth in the taunt of the latter, that Pompeius was always collecting other men's laurels. But Pompeius possessed the power, which Lucullus lacked, of persuading everybody that he had especially consulted their interests. Both the financiers and their victims seemed to be satisfied with the result.

V

The absence of Pompeius in Asia left the field in Rome clear for his friends, his foes, his colleagues and his competitors. While the cat was away, the mice proceeded to play to great purpose. Cæsar's ædileship-campaign was no cheaply equipped affair. He took the field with funds behind him, and with a freedom of expenditure which hinted that Crassus must be his banker. There were others busily at work on the same task. Cæsar however kept his lead.

As soon as he was free from the pre-occupations of office, he next projected a scheme by which Egypt was to be transformed into a province, and he himself was to receive an extraordinary command, like that of Pompeius, for the purpose of carrying out the work. The project failed to pass into law, however. Cæsar's organization was not yet strong enough to dominate the legislative assembly. As there seemed to be more prospect that Crassus, with his influence in the higher groups, might be able to dominate the electoral assembly, the two of them concentrated on that objective. G. Antonius and Lucius Catiline appeared among the candidates, and were supposed to be the persons who were supported by Cæsar and Crassus. Cicero also put in an appearance—timidly enough, and rather admiring himself for his effrontery. As a mere upstart, a 'New

Man,' he could not expect many votes. His platform – entirely his own, for he had no organization – was a coalition of the *equites* with the moderate senatorial party. He believed that such a policy might yet save the constitution.

When it became clear that Crassus and Cæsar were behind Antonius and Catiline, the election managers of the *optimates*, who in ordinary circumstances would have ignored Cicero, suddenly perceived the very real advantages of concentrating their efforts upon him. He already had a good following among the *equites* and the provincial voters. The addition of the powerful vote controlled by the *optimates* assured his success. Before the votes were counted or the poll declared, it was known, by the cheers of the electors who had voted for him, that Cicero was returned. Antonius scraped in after him. Catiline and the other candidates were nowhere.

Notwithstanding his faults, Cicero had great intelligence. In the ballot for provinces he had drawn Macedonia. He almost at once offered Antonius the reversion of this province in return for his benevolent neutrality during their term of office. He did not himself want to go abroad, whereas Antonius very much needed a paying post. Antonius accepted; both consuls were satisfied, but the bargain meant that all the expenditure of Crassus and Cæsar had been thrown away. They had lost both consulships. They had, however, strong representation upon the bench of tribunes – which ensured that Cæsar, rather than Crassus, would be the predominant party during the coming year. This was still further assured when, in the late autumn, the Pontifex Maximus, Q. Metellus Pius, died, and the office he held became vacant.

Metellus Pius had been one of the personal friends and favourite disciples of Sulla – a steady, honest, not very clever man who throughout his life had been a staunch and reliable party-man. In his hands all the vast power which belonged to the official head of the Roman religion had safely lain these many years past. Little though the value of such power might be to a constructive statesman, the faculty for obstruction which resided with the Pontifex Maximus rendered his office one of the utmost importance. If by any means Cæsar could obtain control of it, he would free his future actions from one of the most serious obstacles he might expect to meet.

Sulla had been well aware of such a possibility as this, and had taken care to put the office as far as he could beyond the reach of radical statesmen. He had cancelled the Domitian Law which opened the Pontificate to nomination by the Assembly, and he had made the office once more partly co-optative. But what if Cæsar could revive the Domitian Law? He was himself a pontifex; he was personally eligible. He might capture this key-position before the issue at stake was clearly realized by his opponents.

The new tribunes came into power on December 9th. The consuls did not assume office till January 1st. In the three weeks' interval, Cæsar worked hard.

Titus Labienus was the man who brought before the Assembly a suitable new law. The pontiffs were to nominate candidates, and the Assembly was to elect one. The *optimates* were caught unprepared. Meanwhile, P. Servilius Rullus, another tribune, brought forward a second proposal of a much more sensational kind, which distracted attention from the proposal of Labienus. This was the 'Servilian Rogation.'

No zealous politician, having once heard the terms of the Servilian Rogation, was likely to be interested in such a question as the election of the Pontifex Maximus. Servilius Rullus proposed to set up a board of ten—a Decemvirate. This alone was enough to make a Roman jump. The ten were to possess practically unlimited power except that they were not to trench upon the authority of Pompeius. To the astounded ear of the Roman, the Servilian Rogation simply proposed, with scandalous levity, the dictatorship of a council of ten. As soon as Cicero could enter upon office, he hastened to the fray.

Cicero fell upon the project of the Servilian Rogation with fury, and shook it to fragments. He pursued it, and destroyed it, and stamped upon its ruins. What was left of it, after he had done with it, was carefully withdrawn by its pained author. In the meantime the humbler bill of Titus Labienus had passed the assembly without attracting much notice. . . . We hear no more of the Servilian Rogation, but while Cicero had been shattering it to pieces Cæsar had been negotiating with Crassus for financial and electoral support. He had pledged himself to a degree which meant that failure now was absolute and

irremediable financial ruin. The candidates against him were the leaders of the oligarchy, Q. Catulus and P. Servilius Isauricus. The story is well known how, on the morning of the election, when he left his house, he kissed his mother with the remark that before night he would be either Pontifex Maximus or a fugitive. And there can be no doubt that he spoke the truth.

Fortune smiled. That night he came home triumphantly Pontifex Maximus !

VI

It was the intention of Catiline to stand again for the consulship; and Cæsar and Crassus again lent their support. As the time approached the threat of serious disorder became ever more distinct. Catiline was determined this time to get in. The money expended upon the election was so great as to attract the attention of the government. New and stringent laws against bribery and corruptions were prepared. Catiline was not impressed. He regarded these new laws as mere partisan manoeuvres aimed at himself. His answer was to commission Manlius, an old officer of Sulla, to raise a body-guard of Sullan veterans who could be relied upon when the day came. As they would all be voters, with a right to occupy positions in the polling area, they would be far more dangerous foes than the freedmen and gladiators of the senatorial households.

Cicero immediately obtained authority to suspend the election. The next day, in the senate, he challenged Catiline to declare himself. Catiline scornfully declined. No definite charges had been brought against him, and he refused to discuss vague insinuations. The worst he could be convicted of were the words he used in concluding his refusal: 'There are two parties in the state: one weak, with a weak head: one strong, with no head. I will give the strong one a head.' This was hardly ground for action. The senate dismissed the episode.

The election, therefore, was immediately held. Cicero appeared ostentatiously in a breastplate. No one made any attempt to murder him. Catiline was again defeated. This, though a disappointment, mattered less since Cæsar and his faithful colleague M. Atilus Balbus were both successful in the elections for the prætorship.

Cæsar and Crassus seem at this point to have felt that their support of Catiline was of questionable wisdom. He had not been a successful investment. The only reason for backing him had been the hope that his co-operation would be useful. If, therefore, Catiline made any false step, he would in all probability be instantly jettisoned by Cæsar and Crassus.

This false step Catiline proceeded to make.

On the eighteenth of October, after dusk, Crassus called in person at Cicero's house and communicated to him certain curious letters which had, he said, been deposited at his house. One, addressed to himself, he had opened and read; after which he had gathered the whole consignment and brought them to Cicero. In the senate, next morning, these letters were made public. They contained mysterious warnings of impending danger, and advice to leave the city. The senate was informed that illegal drilling was going on in Etruria. A day later, on October 20th, Cæsar communicated with Cicero giving him information that a rising had been planned for October 27th and 28th. On the strength of this information the senate passed the Emergency Decree. A week later, at the time predicted by Cæsar, Manlius raised the standard of revolt at Fæsulæ. Troops were at once set in motion; Rome, patrolled by the consul's men, was quiet. The government offered rewards for further information: but at the moment none was forthcoming.

On the night of November the sixth, however, an urgent messenger arrived at the house of Cicero - a woman named Fulvia, who brought full information from a certain Q. Curius concerning a meeting held at M. Porcius Læca's house in Scythemaker Street. She was able to name a crowd of men who had been present - Catiline; P. Lentulus the prætor; Cethegus, a famous boss of the political underworld; Publius and Servius Sulla; Cassius Longinus, and many others to the number of thirty-five. Plans had been laid for murdering various dangerous persons, and burning their houses. Two persons, L. Vargunteius and C. Cornelius, were told off to deal with Cicero the next morning, the seventh of November.

Was this story true? The acid test would be the arrival of the alleged assassins. Cicero hastily sent for witnesses, and several senators of repute hurried to his house and took

up positions for observation. At dawn, sure enough, Vargunteius and Cornelius arrived, found the house closed, tried to persuade the porter to give them admission, and on being firmly refused went away with threats and disorder. Convinced now that his information was accurate, Cicero convoked the senate. Catiline himself attended and, sitting alone on his bench, boycotted by his fellow-senators, he listened without flinching to the famous speech¹ in which Cicero denounced him and all his works, and commanded him to leave the city. Catiline attempted to reply; but he could only obtain an imperfect hearing. All the same, the evidence was insufficient to justify his arrest. Even with the Emergency Resolution to back him, Cicero contented himself with threats and allegations. When the consul addressed the Assembly, he met with some scepticism from an audience experienced in verbal pyrotechnics. It was generally recognised that the case against Catiline was unproved, and rested upon very questionable foundations.

Immediately after the rising of the senate Catiline left the city. He sent a circular letter to the leading men of Rome, informing them that having been falsely accused, and having no opportunity of defending himself, he was retiring to Massilia. To his friend Quintus Catulus he wrote, solemnly asserting his innocence, and attributing the attack made upon him to his championship of the poor. He denied Cicero's allegations that he was bankrupt and desperate. He was (he said) perfectly able to meet his liabilities. But since troops were being sent against him, he proposed to defend himself.

VII

On the evening of the second of December, in the year 63 B.C., a party of Gallic travellers, ambassadors from the tribe of the Allobroges, were stopped at the Mulvian Bridge on their way home to Gaul. They were brought to Cicero's house. The next morning they, the documents they carried, and certain Roman citizens (including the prætor P. Cornelius Lentulus

¹ This was the speech beginning: 'Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?' and containing the famous tag: 'O tempora! O mores!' which is probably one of the world's most famous quotations.

Sura) were all of them together produced before the bar of the senate.

In his preliminary speech Cicero described the case he proposed to make. These Gallic ambassadors had been approached by Lentulus through the agency of a merchant, a Gaul, and persuaded that it was to their interest to take part in the conspiracy of Catiline and his friends. They were induced to believe that many important persons, whose names created a deep impression upon them, were in the plot. All they had to do was to obtain for Catiline the help of a body of Gallic cavalry from their fellow tribesmen. In return they would obtain from the new government the concessions which they had failed to obtain from the old.

The ambassadors had at first consented. Then they grew frightened, and told the whole story to A. Fabius Sanga, who at once told Cicero. By Cicero's instructions the ambassadors then asked for written guarantees. These they obtained. They had then been sent by Lentulus to Catiline, and had been arrested with the documents upon them.

Witnesses were then brought forward. The first was a certain Vulturcius, the guide appointed by Lentulus to conduct the ambassadors to Catiline. He was now offered a free pardon in return for a full confession: and Vulturcius proceeded to make one. He had a letter given him for Catiline, and verbal instructions. The latter were alleged to include exhortations from Lentulus to Catiline to set free the slaves and to hurry to Rome so that, when the city was set on fire by Lentulus and his friends, and the massacre began, he might intercept those who escaped.

The horror of the *optimates* at these hideous revelations can better be imagined than described. Fire?—massacre?—servile insurrection? All the other witnesses were heard, and their evidence interpreted, in the light of this preliminary sensation. The Allobroges gave evidence that they had been requested to obtain a body of Gallic cavalry, and that projects for destroying the city had been discussed in their presence. Some of their hearers must have reflected that their knowledge of colloquial Latin was probably imperfect. The letters were then brought forward. Cethegus, shown a letter, acknowledged his hand and seal. Opened, the letter proved to be to the

tribal chiefs of the Allobroges, and contained an undertaking to make good his promise to the ambassadors – whatsoever that may have been; and requesting that the promises made by the ambassadors – nature not stated – should likewise be fulfilled. He was questioned respecting certain weapons found in his house, and he replied that he was a collector. Statilius admitted a similar letter, in similar vague terms. Lentulus did likewise, but as a magistrate, requested permission to speak. This being granted, he denied the whole set of implications. He admitted the isolated facts, but denied the deductions drawn from their cumulative effect. Gabinius, when his turn came, was quite rude to the august assembly, and seemed very angry about something, though – like Lentulus – he could not deny the isolated facts.

The result was only too certain. Fatally prejudiced at the outset by the unsupported assertions of Vulturcius, a traitor who had turned State-evidence, the senate interpreted all the vague phrases in the letters in the darkest sense. The associates had ruined themselves by their caution and discretion. They were committed to custody by order of the senate, while Cicero went off to communicate to the People their happy delivery from fire, sword and robbery, hideous death and horrible outrage. He laid the colour on thick. What the associates meanwhile were saying about him has not been recorded; but it was probably as lurid and as picturesque as anything he could say of them.

VIII

A day's interval followed. A fierce struggle seems to have been waged. Cicero dared not go back. He dared not now release the prisoners: he dared not put them on trial, for a good advocate – such as Cæsar – before an impartial tribunal – such as the Assembly – would have torn to pieces the airy fabric of evidence so skilfully built up out of political prejudice and the unsupported word of an informer. Cicero himself was only guessing: he had no really reliable facts. Some of his fellow *optimates* wanted Cæsar and Crassus to be included in the indictment, as clearly parties to the conspiracy. Cicero was far too wise to lend himself to this. An attempt to catch the

Prince of the Bankers, and the King of the Roman Underworld, in so frail a web might have meant disaster.

On the fifth of December, Cicero asked for the advice of the House. The consular benches spoke first, and were unanimous for the death penalty. Crassus was absent. The prætorian benches followed with Cæsar, as prætor-elect, among the first. In after years Cæsar was to do many mighty deeds; but he never did a braver one in Gaul or Alexandria than he did now, when, alone and unsupported, he faced the senate, and coldly, deliberately, in its teeth, spoke in defence of the accused.

Men, (he said), when they deliberate over matters of critical importance, should be free from love, hatred, pity or anger, for these passions never fail so to cloud the mind as to hinder the judgment. 'Let us think first of our repute, not of the guilt of Lentulus and his friends. Could a punishment fit the crime, I might vote for it; but since that can never be, let us be guided by what the law lays down.' He went on to point out that the eloquence employed had no other effect than to prejudge the case before them. A man of low estate may lose his temper and his head without much harm; statesmen, however, have no such liberty. Excessive and unjust punishments defeat their own aim, and arouse sympathy for the criminal. The punishment proposed was not, perhaps, cruel—for death is a merciful end to human pain—but it was certainly unknown to the law. It created a dangerous precedent which might be used to the detriment of the state by men of less good will. Their ancestors had had good reason for the restrictions which they had placed upon the death penalty. 'This institution of our forefathers has great weight with me. I think we should be cautious how we break in upon it. Certainly they, who from so small beginnings could raise this mighty empire, must in virtue and wisdom have excelled us, who find difficulty in preserving what they acquired.' He ended by advising that the accused should be kept in rigorous custody until matters had cooled down, and could be calmly investigated.

This speech caused a revulsion of feeling. Many of those who had given their votes for death, now withdrew them. Cicero therefore rose again. In his speech, the Fourth Catilinarian oration, he made a desperate attempt to undo the effect of Cæsar's speech. He twisted Cæsar's words; he repeated (with

exaggerations) the wild accusations he had already hurled at the prisoners; mere assumptions he treated as proved facts, and for the sake of creating prejudice he mentioned names—Gaius Gracchus, Saturninus—which it might have been safer to leave unspoken. A deadlock seemed to have been reached: but another power now rose, and proceeded to turn the scale: Marcus Cato.

Cato was the typical oligarch of the decadent period—the perfect specimen of the beast as the Lord had created it. He had the gift of appealing with matchless effect to the worst prejudices and most embittered passions of his fellow partisans. He began by pointing out that they were not there to punish the accused, but to defend themselves, and their advice must be based upon that foundation. . . . This was by far the most effective debating point made that day. Cato spent the rest of his speech in the task of hammering it home—and home he hammered it. Like Cicero, he assumed his conclusions, prejudged his case, and took for granted the questions in dispute: but he had touched the nerve he wanted. The senators who had changed their minds now again changed them. Tiberius Claudius Nero proposed a postponement of the debate: but this was negatived. The vote for the death penalty was passed by a large majority.

That night the prisoners were executed.

IX

Meanwhile an urgent messenger had arrived hot-foot in Rome—Q. Cæcilius Metellus Nepos, direct from the headquarters of Pompeius. Was there any opportunity that Pompeius might get the command against Catiline? Alas, none! He was too late. It was already in the hands of Metellus Celer and M. Antonius, both of them allies of Cicero. The representative of Pompeius was almost at once in touch with Cæsar, and evidently shared the point of view for which Cæsar had spoken. Lentulus and his friends were victims of a judicial murder. No case had been made out against them. A precedent had been set which warned every member of the *populares* of what he might look for at the hands of his political enemies.

The self-complacency and vanity of Cicero were so incurable

-he lived so much in a romantic world of his own - that he may never have realised what he had done. He believed himself to be a matchless hero and a second father of his country. He received his first shock when, on the first of January, he formally relinquished his office. The custom was for the retiring consul to oblige with a speech, and Cicero came prepared to let off some more fireworks. He was sharply pulled up by Metellus Nepos and L. Calpurnius Bestia, as tribunes, who prohibited him from any action other than taking the oath. Metellus made the upsetting remark that a man who had condemned Roman citizens unheard did not deserve to be heard himself. Cicero was not defeated by this. Amid loud cheers from his fellow *optimates* he took the oath with the loud remark that he saved the republic from ruin and the city from destruction.

It was not, however, possible to save Catiline or mitigate his fate. He tried to get through the Alpine passes into Gaul, but he was surrounded by the troops of the government, and brought to bay. He and the Sullan veterans with him died like Romans, sword in hand, with their faces to the foe. Of whatsoever faults they may have been guilty during their lives, they did credit by their deaths to the military school in which they had been trained.

X

A new phase of the struggle began with an attempt to involve as many of the leaders of the *populares* as possible in responsibility for Catiline's conspiracy. Cæsar, however, was an infinitely more skilful tactician than Catiline had ever been. He began his year of office as prætor by opening an enquiry into the conduct of the building operations on the Capitol - for which Catulus was responsible - and bringing forward a proposal to transfer the works to Pompeius. Every one knew what this implied. Although nothing came of the proposal, Catulus was disconcerted and Pompeius flattered. The *optimates* answered this by instigating the informers who gave evidence in the Catilinarian cases to name Cæsar as one of the conspirators. Q. Curius asserted to the senate that his information to this effect came from Catiline himself. Q. Vettius was even put up to lay an information against Cæsar before the quæstor

Novius, and undertook to produce a document in Cæsar's own hand. Cæsar answered by calling upon Cicero; who bore testimony that his first definite evidence concerning the conspiracy had come from Cæsar. This quashed Curius: while Vettius soon found that he had made a mistake in challenging the prætor, the head of the Roman legal administration. That powerful magistrate promptly called him into court, and failing to receive the recognizances demanded, cast Vettius into gaol, where he soon was joined by the quæstor Novius – the latter for daring to accept an action against a superior magistrate. Not only so, but Vettius soon found himself in worse trouble. He had supplied a written list of the alleged conspirators, and subsequently he asked for it back, in order to amend it. Being requested to state by word of mouth the emendations he proposed, he hesitated and declined. This created so strong a presumption of fraud, that his career as an informer came to an abrupt, but not too early end.

Cicero himself, perturbed by the turn of affairs, asked the senate to declare that no action could lie against him; and the senate promptly re-affirmed the protection given by its emergency decree. So shocked was Metellus at this, that he brought forward a bill authorising Pompeius Magnus to take charge of the whole situation. A discreditable scene followed. Cato snatched the paper out of Metellus' hands; and when Metellus went on reciting the provisions from memory, another tribune stopped his mouth. The senate intervened by suspending Metellus and Cæsar from their offices.

Cæsar immediately shut himself up in his own house, and declined with thanks the offers of support made by a large crowd of sympathizers who camped under his windows. Metellus set off for Pompeius' headquarters. The senate at once surrendered, and the two resumed their interrupted offices. So angry were the *optimates* that when Pompeius suggested himself as a candidate for the consulship next year, they let him know that he could not expect their support.

The upshot of all this was that the informers were discredited, their evidence was at an end, Pompeius and the *optimates* were on bad terms, and a strong precedent for common action between Cæsar and Pompeius had been created. And Pompeius was on his way home.

Cæsar's pro-prætorian province was Spain. He got off to it only with difficulty. On the very eve of his departure some of his creditors distrained upon him, and Cæsar was left desolate. Crassus, however, came to the rescue. He bought up the debts himself, and Cæsar started for Spain, while grim old Crassus folded and put away in his strong box bonds for the vast sum of eight hundred talents. He knew his man.

The work of Pompeius in the east had been such as deserved the warmest appreciation from his countrymen. He had taken no unconstitutional advantage of his military forces; he had violated no principle and harmed no man. It merely puzzled him that in spite of these facts he was treated as if he had been an enemy. His earnest attempts to be impartial earned him a cold reception. Cato declined to approve of a marriage between one of his sisters and Pompeius. As it was highly necessary for Pompeius to have representation among the high magistrates, and his own candidature was not acceptable, he ran L. Afranius for the consulship, and got him in. Even here, however, his conduct was criticized, and Pompeius was accused of open bribery. His position was by no means a comfortable one.

His formal triumph, held in September, was a wonderful affair. The banner which headed the procession bore the names of Asia, Pontus, Armenia, Paphlagonia, Cappadocia, Syria, the Scythians, the Jews, the Albanians, the Iberians, the Cretans, the Bastarnæ, and the kings Mithradates and Tigranes. The gold, silver and jewels were stupendous in amount and value. The personal humanity and kindness which endeared Pompeius to his generation were visible in the prisoners – not one of whom was chained or harshly treated. A crowd of kings, princes and great persons, three hundred and twenty-four in number, walked in front of Pompeius' car (including Aristobulus, the king of the Jews) all dressed in their proper national costumes. Not one was executed. All except two were set free afterwards, and allowed to return home. Yet even after this, his position was difficult, and he did not seem to know what to do to better it.

If the whole time-table had been planned beforehand by Cæsar, it could not have fallen out more neatly for his interests than it did. The programme was, that as soon as L. Afranius

had entered upon his consulship, with all the backing of Pompeius and his recent triumph, the Asiatic Settlement and the bill for Land-Pensions to the troops of Pompeius should be brought forward for approval. Afranius, however, found the task beyond him. Lucullus led the opposition. The senate refused to ratify the Asiatic Settlement. Although it was one great measure, complete and interwoven, and could not be taken in isolated parts, the senate insisted upon discussing it clause by clause, and scrutinizing the details, as if anxious to make clear that Pompeius was a servant, not a master. As Pompeius had acted in good faith and had made excellent settlements, this suspicion merely hurt his feelings. The land scheme fared no better. This was the state of affairs when Cæsar, his year in Spain over, returned to Italy much richer than he had left it; and with distinctly increased prestige walked once more upon the political stage of Rome.

XI

The advent of Cæsar transformed the situation. All the troubles of Rome were soon poured into his sympathetic ear. Pompeius could not get his Asiatic Settlement ratified or his Land-Pensions passed. Crassus also had worries. The revenue farmers had bought up the Asiatic taxes at a price which now turned out to be quite unjustified. They were faced with heavy losses, and had applied to Crassus to lay their case before the senate. Crassus, however, up to the present, had been able to do nothing. . . . Young Clodius wanted to be made a plebeian, so that he could be a tribune, and make things hot for Cicero; but every one raised difficulties. A few conversations soon put a new face on matters. The proud Pompeius and the scowling Crassus were induced to meet at Cæsar's friendly table. With his gift for lucidity he soon made them see exactly what was wanted. Combined together, the potency of Pompeius with the military, the influence of Crassus with the financiers, and the control of Cæsar over the back streets could form a power able to sweep all opponents away. The Triumvirate was formed, and its aims were defined. Pompeius was to have his ratifications; Crassus, an abatement in the price of the Asiatic taxes for his financial friends; Cæsar was to have the consulship for the ensuing year, and after it a

province, where he could make a little money. This was a reasonable proposition, to which Crassus, now his chief creditor, lent a ready ear. Over those dinner tables it is highly probable that many interesting things were said which history has not recorded for our benefit.

Cæsar had larger views than he is usually credited with. He hoped to have L. Lucceius, a sympathizer, as his colleague in the consulship; and had he realized this hope, history might have been different. Even in the teeth of the triumvirate, however, the *optimates*, through their control of the upper divisions of the electoral assembly, managed to get M. Calpurnius Bibulus in as second consul. Not from the triumvirate, as Cato fancied, did the fall of the republic date, but from the election of Bibulus – an ill-omened bird who portended evil.

The Committee of Three was intended to be a committee of four. Cæsar wanted Cicero to be the fourth. Had Cicero accepted, again history would have been different. Cæsar, through his confidential representative, Balbus, undertook to conform his policy to such principles as Cicero and Pompeius thought right. It was scarcely possible for him to have done more. But Cicero refused. That refusal turned the committee from an equal combination into a triangle.¹ Cæsar had tried to form a National Government. He had failed. Subsequently he tried again and again, and if he still failed it was not for want of asking.

As for young Clodius – a lively and amusing fellow – he seems to have been patted on the shoulder and told to wait a little till his seniors were less busy . . . his turn might come.

XII

There was no hanging back. The Committee of Three advanced to the fray. It was on Cæsar, the new consul, that the responsibility fell, and he faced up to the fight with cool determination.

First he tried politeness. Nothing came of this. The

¹ 'A combination of democratic, plutocratic and military bossism which proved more dangerous to political liberty than had been the dictatorship of Sulla,' says G. W. Botsford (*Roman Assemblies*, p. 441). At any rate, we have the clear testimony of Cicero himself (*Ad Atticus*, II, iii) that he was asked to make a fourth

senate had no definite objection to any of Cæsar's measures, but it would not suggest improvements, and it would not put forward a policy of its own; it simply passive-resisted everything. There was no rule of procedure in the senate such as that which in modern parliaments is directed against mere obstruction. Cæsar could not prevent Cato from talking indefinitely, and so blocking all his measures. It was quite obvious that the senate could prevent any action, and that it intended to do so.

There was, however, an alternative – the Assembly. Cæsar turned to this, and proceeded by the method of legislative resolution. Here, however, he was immediately countered by Bibulus, who placed his veto on the proceedings. Bibulus would not amend the bills, would not suggest alternative proposals, and would not argue. He simply dropped a dead veto across the path and left the matter there.

We must remember that Cæsar's measures were not revolutionary, nor – if it came to that – even especially liberal. They consisted merely of the bill ratifying the Asiatic settlement of Pompeius, and that creating the land-grants for the troops. Hundreds of thousands of human beings were waiting anxiously for the enactment of measures designed in their interests. The refusal of the *optimates* was the revolutionary act – not the proposal of Cæsar. The electors would quite undoubtedly pass the bills. But the *optimates* had the legal power to stop the legislative machine, and stop it they did.

A pause succeeded, while the antagonists studied the political chessboard.

Then, on behalf of the Committee of Three, the tribune Vatinius brought forward a bill. It happened that the senate, in the course of allocating the proconsular provinces, had made to Cæsar and Bibulus the remarkable allocation of 'Woods and Forests in Italy.' Such an office meant the political annihilation of Cæsar. But the Assembly, with its sovereign legislative power, could override any such action; and Vatinius now brought in a legislative measure to grant to Cæsar, after his consulship, the province of Cisalpine Gaul for five years. This, in ordinary English, meant that Cæsar was given for five years the right to maintain an army in Italy north of the Padus.

With this, Bibulus could not interfere, as Vatinius was a

tribune. However, three tribunes were found who were willing to announce inauspicious omens – which blocked the bill. And now we come to the definite and decisive moment. It was when this bill was blocked that the real revolution took place which changed Rome from an oligarchy to an empire. The Assembly proceeded to vote regardless of any one's legal power to veto it; and the bill was passed by a large majority. This was on February 28th in the year 59; and Cæsar at once began recruiting for his army.

Pompeius had passed the word to his own men, who, citizens all, had crowded into Rome to vote. They packed the scene during the famous public meeting at which Cæsar and Pompeius conducted a short dialogue upon the platform.

Cæsar said: *'And if, after the electors have passed our bills, our enemies resort to the sword — ?'*

Pompeius answered, so that all could hear: *'Then I will resort to sword and buckler too.'*

XIII

By the advice of his friends, Bibulus retired from the contest, having dropped one comprehensive veto in the path of Cæsar's legislation.¹ Cæsar, quite indifferent, passed his whole programme and completed the work of the triumvirate. He had succeeded in his aim without suffering the fate of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. He had made the Assembly once more, as of old, supreme over the senate. The vetoes he had defied were ghostly technicalities without reality or substance. The votes of the electors were the substance and the reality. Had they been guarded and enforced by the swords of the Asiatic veterans? Why, so they always had been backed by the sword, ever since the first secession to the Mons Sacer! There never had been a vote cast in Rome, that was not guaranteed by the citizen in arms.

The Committee of Three did not intend to see their work undone as soon as Cæsar vacated office. They had taken care that two consuls of their own party should succeed him. One

¹ Mr. Marsh (*Founding of the Roman Empire*, 2nd ed., p. 98) says: 'Bibulus had at least succeeded in stripping off every pretence of constitutional action, and making Cæsar's contempt of law both obvious and flagrant.' But Cæsar and his supporters would have asked whether the vetoes of Bibulus were more than vexatious ingenuities intended to prevent the electors from voting?

necessary step remained. It had been foreseen that since Cicero would not enter the Committee, it would prove advisable to put him out of action. Early in Cæsar's consulship Cicero made a speech hostile to the Committee. Within a few hours Cæsar, as Pontifex Maximus, had called an Assembly, and conducted the formalities which transformed Clodius into a plebeian, and therefore into a person qualified to stand for the tribuneship. Clodius had lost no time in entering his name. His task was to hold the street for Cæsar, while Cæsar was absent in Gaul. Cæsar stayed in Rome just long enough to see Clodius pass his bill interdicting all persons who had been guilty of executing Roman citizens without trial. This was his long-contemplated slap back at Cicero. As Cicero slowly and disconsolately left Italy for Epirus, followed by the triumphant demonstrations of Clodius, Cæsar made a rapid journey north, leaving Pompeius and Crassus to mark time.

Clodius was the best substitute for Cæsar that any one ever discovered. Like Cæsar, he had all the self-confidence that comes of ancient lineage – a cool courage and a talent for the chess-play of politics second only to Cæsar's own. He was a full-blooded Claudian, a brother of Appius Claudius, a brilliant and charming individual, delightful company, a useful partner, and not at all too bright or good for human nature's daily food. Publius Clodius and his sister Clodia were easily the most interesting and most reprehensible persons in Rome. The programme of democratic legislation which Clodius passed was the fulfilment of the beginnings made by Cæsar. The organization which Clodius proceeded to found for the *populares* – his system of street clubs – was more effective than anything which Cæsar himself had created.

While Clodius in Rome perfected the control of the *populares* over the legislative Assembly, some extraordinary events took place in Gaul. Cæsar had obtained the addition of Gaul beyond the Alps to his proconsular province; and in giving it to him the senate, knowing the disturbed state of Gaul (which resembled the condition of the country when the Cimbri and Teutones appeared) not improbably hoped with fervour that Cæsar, like so many of the generals against the Cimbri, would manage to leave his bones there. The average Roman had, it is probable, only the haziest idea of what had been arranged.

He knew that the elderly and more or less bankrupt politician, who had just finished his consulship, had gone to Gaul; but of the real character or future of that elderly man, he had no suspicion.

Cæsar did not leave his bones in Gaul. The average Roman never saw the lightning journey he made over the Alps, nor the keen and sleepless activity which began to evolve from the dilapidated Roman legions under his control the mighty military machine which was to be. But the news which arrived in Rome roused enthusiasm. Cæsar had completely out-manœuvred and defeated the vast host of the Helvetii. There would be no new Cimbrian terror. As September wore, fresh and even more sensational news arrived. Cæsar had pushed north, had met the German King Ariovistus – the first contact of German and Roman – had wiped out his army, and had gazed upon the great Rhine. This was what had made Pompeius so popular. This was the kind of news the Roman elector liked to hear! He reflected, no doubt, with secret surprise, that Cæsar must be quite a soldier! . . . But after all, the explanation was simple. Cæsar applied both to politics and to war a similar gift for organization and management.

XIV

With Cæsar in Gaul and Clodius in control at Rome, the senate recovered but slowly from its defeat. Though Cicero's exile was not a long one, and he was soon recalled, he came back a subdued person, to an Italy where the Committee of Three was omnipotent. He arrived in Rome not very long before the news of the conquest of northern Gaul. Cæsar had penetrated to regions whither no official Roman foot had preceded him; and Cicero and the oligarchs looked on while Italy rejoiced, and men felt that the Alia was at last avenged. The senate ordered a thanksgiving for fifteen days – an honour hitherto unprecedented. . . . Cicero instinctively began to pay court to Pompeius.

Had the *optimates* followed Cicero with any kind of party discipline, they might at this point have detached Pompeius from the Committee of Three. But they were unable to realize the real facts of the case; they could not see that Pompeius was at heart one of themselves. When he asked for a command

in Egypt, the game was in their hands. By refusing, they drove him once more towards Cæsar, who at once grasped the chance.

The progress of the war in Gaul had entirely changed the purposes and programme of Cæsar. He had probably intended to return to a second consulship in the year 53; but all such projects were now dropped. Something much bigger was looming ahead – the vast prestige and enormous wealth which would attach to the man who became the conquerer of Gaul: an equality with Pompeius. With such a prestige and power, he might carry out policies that hitherto had been beyond his contemplation; he might use the newly revived power of the Assembly to reconstruct the constitution of Rome, abolish the oligarchy, and replace it by a larger and better organized body adequate to the demands of the growing empire. Exactly how he could achieve these ends could not be prophesied; but the possibility could be foreseen.

Accordingly he asked Pompeius and Crassus to meet him in Gaul. At Lucca, early in the year 56, the conference met. The Committee of Three renewed its pact and drafted a new programme. Pompeius and Crassus were to be consuls next year. Crassus was to have Syria as his proconsular province: Pompeius was to have the Spains. As for Cæsar, his share was to be the upholding of the acts of his consulship, and the extension of his proconsular command in Gaul for another five years, with the right to raise the number of his legions to ten, the increase to be paid for by the central state treasury. . . . Not until some months later was the existence of this agreement known to the *optimates*. The successful campaign of Cæsar against the Veneti, during which he reached the Channel and the almost mythical British seas, underlined the supremacy of the committee. After some difficulty, and prolonged delay, Pompeius and Crassus were at last elected.

The year of their consulship was the zenith of the committee's career. All the necessary legislation was passed. The departure of Crassus to take up his Syrian command constituted the first downward step. Even at the time, men thought its auspices were bad. Pompeius, who was left to control matters in Italy, was either incapable of preserving order, or not too eager to do so. While Cæsar was crossing the Channel, and

exploring Britain itself, the strife between the *optimates* and the *populares*, the senate and the Assembly, reached a pitch at which a deadlock seemed inevitable. Perhaps it was unreasonable to expect Pompeius to worry much over this. It was precisely in such situations that he became an indispensable man.

XV

The elements of the picture blended, blurred, dissolved, and rapidly began to take on new forms. Cæsar was doing his best to achieve Cicero's friendship and alliance. Every courtesy, every helpfulness he could think of, or could be suggested to him, he lavished on Cicero. He might have been successful, had not Cicero been conscious of an increasing friendliness with Pompeius. Then the death of Julia destroyed the personal link with Cæsar which meant so much to a man who, like Pompeius, lived wholly in the actual world of things and persons. When the startling news burst like a thunderclap upon Rome, that Crassus and his whole army had been destroyed by the Parthians, the Committee of Three was at an end. Quite obviously, instead of Cæsar attracting Cicero over to the Committee, Cicero was attracting Pompeius over to the *optimates*, and smoothing his path to a reconciliation with the oligarchs.

After all, Pompeius belonged there. No man was more a man of the senatorial oligarchy. But it meant the end of any dreams of a 'national government,' a 'government of concentration,' a friendly combination to find a way through the deadlock. The policy of the senate was simply one of obstruction. To paralyse the action of the Assembly was its chief, and perhaps its only aim. As Pompeius moved more and more towards the right, the political machine gradually stopped altogether. No elections could be held. The deadlock was absolute.

Then came another catastrophe, as if one more floor of the republic had fallen in. Street fights between the thugs of the *optimates* and the gangsters of the *populares* had been frequent. The deadlock was still in being; no magistrates had been elected; government was at an end, when after a casual contest between passing gangs on the road at Bovillæ, word was passed

to the leader of the thugs that Clodius himself had been present, and had been carried wounded into a house which could be pointed out. A rapid march back verified this information. Clodius was identified, dragged out, and murdered. His dead body lay on the highway until his servants dared at last to go and rescue it.

Clodius was no Apache or Bowery tough. He belonged rather to the type of the Regency Bucks, the 'Corinthians,' a man who found no difficulty in combining blue blood with red politics, and a touch of genius with a criminal streak. His death, in this manner, had repercussions which ran to the highest ranks of Roman aristocracy and to the furthest corners of Gaul. Cæsar, suddenly isolated by the defection of Pompeius and the deaths of Crassus and Clodius, had no time to spend on regretting his misfortunes: for the Gauls, who were well-informed concerning events in Rome, promptly rose. Through a succession of unforeseen accidents, Cæsar seemed to have slipped down to the very bottom of the hill, and how he would ever recover himself or restore his power remained to be seen.

The famous Seventh Book of the *Commentaries* is the detailed story how Cæsar, thrown upon his own resources, showed himself to be possessed of military genius which classes him with Alexander or Hannibal, and of a steadier nerve and more unbeatable courage than was shown even by them. The shabby crowd of filibusters, hungry for loot, which had shuffled after him to the Gallic wars was by now a polished and glittering military machine, disciplined like a Guards' Corps, and capable of anything, fighting or fatigue. He needed all its powers, and all his skill. He was fighting against tremendous odds for his life.

The Gallic revolt had not been the only result of the death of Clodius. The sun of intelligence had dawned upon the senate. No sooner was Cæsar's organizer and representative out of the way, than the senatorial oligarchy made its first advances to its new champion, Pompeius. Since no consuls had been elected, an emergency step was taken, and Pompeius was elected sole consul, without colleague: that is to say, he was made a dictator on behalf of the oligarchy. Cæsar's remaining representatives could do nothing to prevent it. While Cæsar fought those campaigns which took him south by

Avaricum to Gergovia, and north again to Alesia, Pompeius proceeded to pay for the honour that had been conferred upon him. This price was the revocation of all the protective measures which had been designed to guard Cæsar against his domestic enemies when he returned from Gaul.

Up to this point, Pompeius had been a man whose wisdom might sometimes be questioned, but never his honour. Now for the first time, even his honour became questionable. He did not merely fail a friend – he betrayed one.

And from this moment all his luck left him, and he was no more the man he had been.

CHAPTER XVI

CÆSAR: THE COMPOSITION OF THE POPULAR AND THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS

(52 B.C. – 43 B.C.)

I

When, in the autumn of the year 52 B.C., Vercingetorix surrendered Alesia into the hands of Cæsar, the avalanche of Cæsar's ill-luck was at last stayed.

Cæsar had survived an ordeal such as few men could have passed; he remained triumphant, with all the material sources of his power intact, but he was no longer one among many allies. Catiline was dead; Crassus dead; Clodius dead; Pompeius had gone over to the enemy, and Cæsar survived in a strange isolation, the leader of a feebler generation, of smaller stature and diminished force. He spent one season more in finishing the Gallic war and in organizing a settlement which might last a few years until he had leisure to attend to it. So now Gaul, up to the banks of the Rhine, was Roman. When Cæsar turned to the consideration of affairs in Rome, he was almost for the first time visible as the outstanding personality we of later ages know. The keener and quicker judges¹ estimated at something like its true value the power of the Gallic army; but not even they had yet a perfectly clear view of its leader. Cæsar was not yet widely known as the author of the *Commentaries*. Pompeius, in particular, was completely deceived concerning the facts of the case. He did not realize the truth; he never knew the real story of the conquest of Gaul. Had he ever realized it his military genius would have told him instantly what manner of man he was facing. But to the end – even to the day of his death – he still remained under a complete misapprehension of Cæsar's character. In this he was merely representative of his day.

¹ e.g., Cælius – Cicero, *Ad Fam.*, VIII, 14.

II

For eighteen months or so, the negotiations between Cæsar and the senate were on foot. Cæsar's future actions and even his future policy were by no means decided. It is probable that his definite intentions went no further than a second consulship, and a programme of reforms intended to break the deadlock and ensure the supremacy of the legislative Assembly in the political life of Rome. Exactly what actions might ultimately be involved in this programme he is hardly likely to have enquired. It was a legitimate programme; no objection could be raised to it; and if, side by side with senate and Assembly, a new magistrate seemed to be emerging, that was due to the logic of events rather than to the will of Cæsar.

But the necessary preliminary to any programme of any kind was a reasonable assurance of personal safety on his return to Rome. His conscience was good. He had committed no crime more serious than that of enforcing, in the teeth of merely technical and vexatious objections, the immemorial legislative sovereignty of the citizen assembly. But for this crime it was an open secret that the *optimates* intended to bring him to account. Cæsar had no illusions. He knew that a court could be and would be packed to condemn him and destroy his legal status. Against this he had obtained protection by the arrangements of the Conference of Lucca. Pompeius had deliberately changed the law in such a way as to rob him of that protection. He required its renewal before he set foot in Rome.

It was just this renewal which he could not get. The senatorial oligarchy was determined to prevent any reform in the State involving an expansion in the number of its members; and since the Assembly was the proposed means by which these reforms were to be enacted, it was determined to block all action of the Assembly and to destroy its powers. As the time slipped by Cæsar had leisure to consider the situation. He was not in any way disposed to admit the claim of the oligarchs that the senate was the republic, and that disagreement with its aims was a crime. If he were driven to it he would have no more hesitation in resorting to force than the senate had had when it slew Tiberius Gracchus. He had as much right to

defend the Assembly by arms as Pompeius had, by similar means, to defend the senate.

He was very moderate in his demands. The negotiations proceeded slowly, so that in an age without newspapers the public opinion of Italy might follow their course and realize their nature. While no one wished for a civil war, the general opinion of Italy became unquestionably in favour of the reasonableness of Cæsar's requests. But the oligarchy had such confidence in the power of Pompeius (a confidence which Pompeius fully shared), that it thought it could defy public opinion and override reason. Even as the time neared the moment when a definite breach must occur, the consequences were not perfectly clear. Cæsar might not fight; and if he did the amount of force employed, if any, might be small, and it might soon be over. This doubt, this uncertainty were an integral part of the situation. The actual consequences which did ensue were a complete surprise.

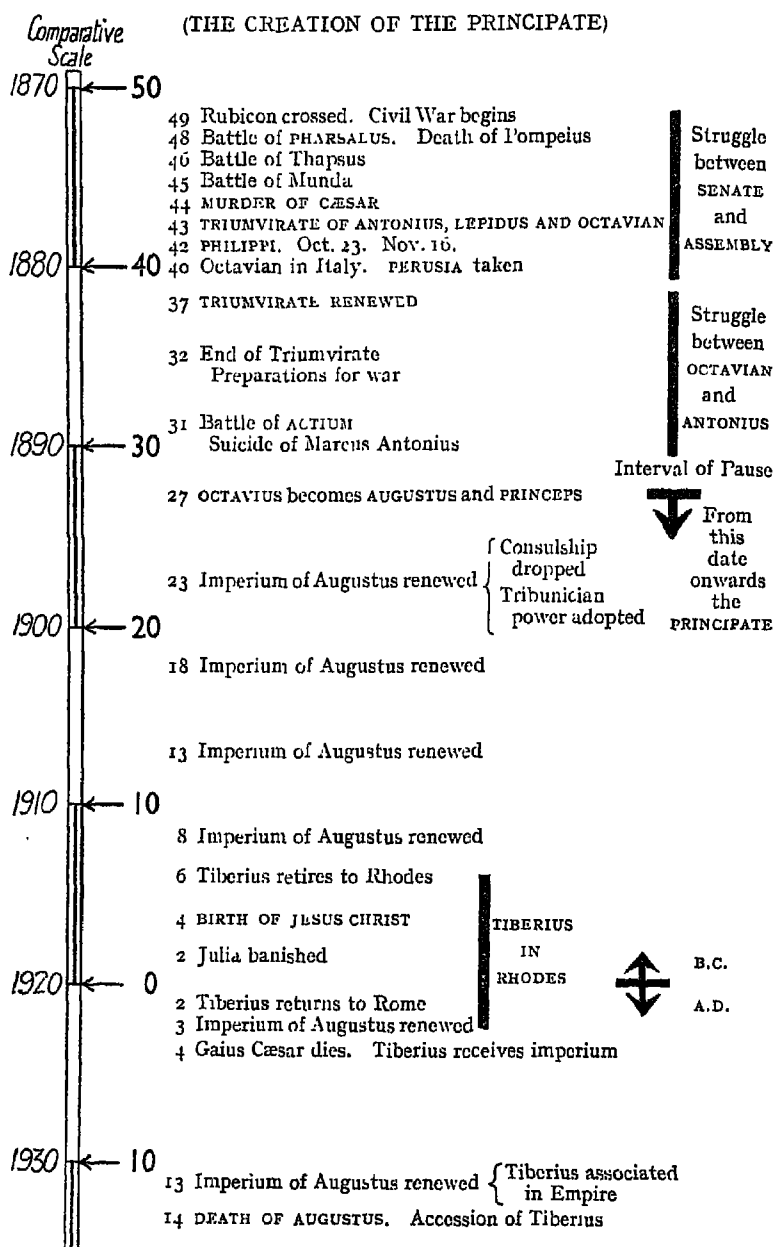
III

The year 50 passed; the year 49 dawned; and with them an age passed away for ever and a new age began. Cæsar was at the extreme southern point of his province, making Ravenna his headquarters while he waited for the news that could not be long delayed. It was the second week in January when at last it came. Marcus Antonius¹ and Q. Cassius, two of Cæsar's representatives on the tribunician bench, arrived with the first accounts of what had happened, and others soon followed. The debates in the senate, continued up to the seventh of January, had culminated on that day by the success of the extreme and violent section of the oligarchs in forcing through a motion ordering Cæsar to disband his army by a given date or be declared a public enemy. Antonius and Cassius, backed by Cæsar's other tribunes, had promptly vetoed the resolution. But the very men who had so admired obstruction by their own party now turned against the idea of obstruction by their opponents. Whether the tribunes were actually threatened may be questionable: they were almost certainly

¹ 'Mark Antony' of course. The reader had better prepare for his subsequent history by taking a good look at the coin facing p. 310 — one of the most remarkable portraits on record and a most enlightening historical document.

FOURTH CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(THE CREATION OF THE PRINCIPATE)



warned. The final break came when the senate passed the Emergency Decree: and the tribunes left the city that night – and here they were.

Cæsar listened to this account of the steps by which he, like the Gracchi, like Glaucia, and like Catiline, had been put under the hammer of the Emergency Decree. He immediately ordered the one legion, which was all he had with him, to assemble at a place appointed. He dressed for the evening as usual – he always remained meticulous in matters of dress – and appeared at supper as if nothing had happened. As dusk fell he apologized to his guests and quietly withdrew. A hired car with a pair of horses was waiting in which he at once set out. After a false start to mislead spies, he turned south. His lights went out and he only reached his destination at daybreak, when he found his troops waiting by the banks of the little river Rubicon, which falls into the sea across the great Æmilian road just north of Ariminum.

He stood there a little while contemplating the river and musing. It was the boundary of his province. Once he passed it, war was let loose with all its infinite possibilities. He fully realized the importance of the step he was about to take.¹ At last he roused himself. After all, he was not now taking a resolution. The resolutions had long been taken. All he was called upon to do was to carry it out.

'The die is cast!' he said – and with that phrase, which later ages remembered and immortalized, he rode into the water; and ten thousand hob-nailed boots came tramping after him through the grey of that January morning.

IV

Cæsar had planned everything with consummate skill. A single legion had been all he could insinuate into Cisalpine Gaul without giving the alarm to his enemies; but one legion was enough. He had started instantly; he had started quietly and unobtrusively; and it was his intention to travel as fast as feet could conveniently go. Ariminum fell into his hands at once. From this point his operations spread. He seized

¹ Part of this story rests upon the testimony of Asinius Pollio, who was one of the officers present and who was no romancer.

Arretium. On the eighteenth of January, Ancona was occupied. The road to Rome was thrown open.

The oligarchs had expected the worst: but no one was more horrified than they when their expectations were fulfilled. Indescribable confusion reigned. Assertions, denials, recriminations, uncertainties darkened counsel. Pompeius himself was far too old a hand to be deceived. With lengthening face he recognized the nature of the rapid military moves with which Cæsar opened the war. He at once evacuated Rome and fell back south. This had the result of creating a disgraceful panic. The oligarchs almost trod on one another in getting out of Rome. So hasty was their departure that they left behind the contents of the public treasury. Q. Domitius managed to garrison Corfinium. Pompeius sent an urgent message to him to hold out as long as he could: but on the twenty-first of February Corfinium fell and nothing remained between Cæsar and Brundisium. Pompeius decided to evacuate Italy altogether and to reorganize over the water in Greece. Accordingly it was a race now for Brundisium. Pompeius got there in time and was safe. While Cæsar sat down outside, unable to do more for want of a siege train, Pompeius ferried his troops over into Epirus. When Cæsar at last entered, it was to find an empty port. In sixty days he had conquered Italy: but Pompeius – alas! – had escaped.

V

By the end of March, Cæsar was back in Rome. It was ten years since he had looked upon the old familiar city; he came back greyer, thinner, balder; he was fifty-three, who when he left it had been forty-three. But he was still the same man – fashionably dressed, carefully manicured, the thinness of his whitening locks tactfully disguised by the laurel wreath which he habitually wore. The few *optimates* who had not been able to escape from Rome gazed at him in bewilderment. Having lived for years in an atmosphere of imaginative romance in which Cæsar was a conspirator, a revolutionary, a Sulla, a Phalaris, a dæmoniac figure of political frenzy, they could not quite grasp why he seemed so polite, so pleasant – why he talked so plausibly, why he asked them to continue to take charge of the administration, and why he wanted them to write to their

friends urging the arrangement of peace. The tribune L. Cæcilius Metellus made an attempt to take advantage of this mildness to hinder Cæsar from possessing himself of the public treasury.¹ It was necessary for Cæsar to speak sharply. . . . They could understand neither clemency nor severity.

His stay in Rome was short. He had swept Pompeius out of Italy; but the military base of Pompeius was his proconsular province of Spain where his principal lieutenants were to be found. This was the next point of attack. Cæsar set out for Spain forthwith. He arrived at Massilia before April was over, too late to prevent Pompeius from throwing a commander into the city, but just in time to invest and mask the great fortress. Before May was over he had reached Spain. Afranius and Petreius, the Pompeian generals, had fixed their headquarters at Ilerda on the river Sicoris, that flows into the Ebro. There Cæsar found them.

It took Cæsar a campaign of six weeks, marching, fighting and digging, to tie up the Pompeian generals and force a surrender. He dismissed them unharmed. Most of the surrendered troops voluntarily enlisted with Cæsar. With the Pompeian armies dissolved Cæsar had no difficulty in subduing the whole of Spain. At an assembly at Corduba he received the submission of the country; he then went on to Gades, embarked, sailed round to Tarraco by sea, and thence travelled by road to Massilia. His return with the prestige of the Spanish campaign meant the surrender of the impregnable Massilia. The defenders saw that there was no hope of relief.

Cæsar was now complete and undisputed master of Italy, Gaul and Spain; and if he had failed to win Africa it was chiefly because of the over-confidence on the part of his representative. His control of this vast *bloc* implied that he was now responsible for its government. Most of the senators were in Greece with Pompeius. Those who remained were neither

¹ He found there 15,000 gold bars, 30,000 silver bars and 30,000,000 sesterii, including the special reserve traditionally marked as only to be touched in the event of an invasion by the Gauls. Cæsar remarked that he was entitled to break into this as he had insured that there should never be another invasion by the Gauls!

The sesterlius is usually reckoned at about 2½d. English, or 5 cents American—but Professor Tenney Frank (*Economic History of Rome*, pp. 80–82) has warned us against taking these equations too seriously. The total was in any case a substantial one.

able nor quite willing to take any responsibility. Definite and immediate decisions were called for; and these were reached best and quickest by an individual. As soon, therefore, as Cæsar's reduction of Spain proved that his power was real, and probably permanent, the prætor Lepidus obtained from the Assembly an authorization to nominate Cæsar as dictator. Cæsar, arriving back in Rome at the end of November, at once saw to the measures most urgently needed. Somewhat frenzied ideas concerning his possible intentions had been prevalent; and under the belief that all debts were to be cancelled many people were refusing to pay their bills, and there was a general paralysis of credit. Cæsar made a few financial regulations applicable to a time of stress and urgency. He also swept away the last traces of the Sullan proscription, by restoring full citizenship to descendants of the proscribed. Finally he held the elections, himself standing for the consulship, to which he was elected with P. Servilius Vatia Isauricus. His dictatorship lasted eleven days, and as soon as he had resigned it he started for Brundisium. On the first day of January in that city he entered upon his second consulship. In less than a year of strenuous activity, therefore, he had shaken down the fabric of senatorial control in Rome, assured his control of Gaul, Italy and Spain and driven Pompeius overseas. He was now ready to follow after Pompeius. . . . The Emergency Decree had destroyed the Gracchi and crushed Glaucia and Catiline; but so far Cæsar had survived.

VI

For nine months, behind the invisible barrier which now cut off Italy from the east, Pompeius had been hard at work. He was a great organizer, and he was organizing a military power capable of crushing Cæsar. An immense fleet, meant to secure Pompeius the command of the sea, was being built in Asia. Nine legions of Roman citizens were drilling under his orders, besides auxiliaries and cavalry from all the best sources in the east, and two more legions from Syria were on the way. Vast quantities of corn were being poured into his granaries. The wealthy states of Asia provided the money. Any one who saw these preparations might be forgiven for thinking that Cæsar was still far from success.

At Thessalonica two hundred senators met. After a formal inauguration with the solemn rites of religion they proceeded to declare themselves the true Roman senate; they declared that all magistrates then in office should continue to retain their power; they created Pompeius commander of the military forces of the republic. The Assembly at Rome, which had elected Cæsar and his colleagues, found it unnecessary to make any declaration of this kind.

The Pompeian fleet, numbering 110 ships, had already taken its station at Corcyra, and the legions were coming overland from Beroëa by road to Dyrrachium on the coast. Pompeius evidently intended to repeat the strategy of Sulla; but he was dealing with an opponent such as Sulla had never had to meet. Cæsar had concentrated twelve legions and a small force of cavalry at Brundisium. The legions were tired and were under full strength, but Cæsar's principal aim was speed. Even if his blow were a feeble one, he wanted at all costs to get it in first. Transport was the difficulty. With the Pompeian fleet at Corcyra, he had failed to get a sufficient amount of tonnage to take his men across the narrow sea: but he would not wait. Ordering his men to leave most of their luggage behind, he filled all the available vessels and on the fourth of January crossed with seven legions which he dumped at the foot of the Ceraunian mountains, a stone's throw from the Pompeian fleet. The astounded Pompeian admiral was Bibulus, his old enemy and colleague in the consulship. Cæsar sent the transports back at once and Bibulus promptly seized thirty of them and burnt them. For the moment the Pompeians had command of the sea, and Cæsar was cut off from Italy.

When Cæsar gambled, he gambled with a nerve and resolution worthy of Cæsar. Without waiting to worry over the dangerous position he was in, he set out for Dyrrachium. Pompeius and his army, plodding sedately on their way, were startled by the news of Cæsar's presence and rapid advance. They hurried agitatedly forward in time to stop him on the banks of the Apous, north of Apollonia. Both armies dug-in opposite one another.

Cæsar's operations may or may not have conformed to the textbooks of war, ancient or modern; but they had successfully wrecked the plans of Pompeius. It was now necessary to

improvise; and this was a game at which Cæsar had all the advantage.

The first object of Cæsar was to get the rest of his army over from Brundisium. He did not know that the Pompeian fleet was blockading the port and he could not account for the long delay. At last he determined to go back in person. Disguised as a workman he slipped on board a native boat and made an attempt to cross the sea by night.

The story is a famous one, how the boat was held up by the southerly gale and the oarsmen lost heart, till one of the passengers came forward and cried to the master: 'Forward, my friend! Fear nothing! Cæsar and his Fortune are with you!' The oarsmen made a second desperate attempt to get out to sea but again failed; and although Cæsar was still willing to go it was clear that Fortune was against the trip.

Fortune was wise. The same gale that drove Cæsar back brought M. Antonius over with all the men he could stow aboard. They had wild and nerve-racking experiences. After being driven far to the north, the transports were chased into harbour by a Pompeian war-fleet. No sooner were they safe than the gale proceeded to shift and blow the Pompeians on shore. As soon as the news was known, Cæsar broke camp and moved. By a mingling of rapidity and luck he picked up Antonius and got clear. He now had nine legions and was in a better position to fight.

VII

The operations round Dyrrachium are less famous than the sieges of Gergovia and Alesia, partly because Pompeius was a far greater general than Vercingetorix, and the rapid move and countermove, the change and alternation of fortune still bewilder the average reader who tries to follow the intricacies of the struggle. Pompeius might have won if Cæsar would have played the orthodox game. But Cæsar was too cunning to meet Pompeius on ground where the latter was a past master. By a systematic course of unexpected and unorthodox steps, Cæsar kept Pompeius baffled. But the contest was close. The aim of Cæsar was to force a decision. The aim of Pompeius was to drag the war out till Cæsar's cause should collapse. Cæsar tried to shut Pompeius in with a fortified line and to

divert the water supplies. Pompeius would have been forced either to face Cæsar's veterans in a pitched battle or to escape by sea had not deserters betrayed the weak spot in Cæsar's fortifications. The instant attack which Pompeius launched at the indicated place succeeded in breaking the blockade and freeing him from the strangle-hold. The conditions were now reversed. But instead of waiting to be blockaded Cæsar broke right away, retreated to Apollonia and took the road into the interior of Epirus.

His retreat at this precise juncture was a masterpiece of sympathetic psychology. The embittered hatred against Cæsar which continually simmered among the *optimates* now boiled right over. Their judgment vanished. Pompeius himself, seeing matters with the sober eyes of reality, was against pursuit. One of the chief difficulties of Cæsar was the fatigue which little by little was wearing away his magnificent legions. They were being seriously overworked; they were at present underfed; the right game for Pompeius was to wait and watch. But the refugees foamed at the mouth and gibbered with rage at any mention of such considerations. Pompeius himself was insulted with continual sneers and innuendoes. He could only shrug his shoulders and give way against his better judgment.¹

Cæsar's retreat was a far greater test of grit and discipline than any amount of fighting. It was a dull, weary trudge up the valley of the Aous by men who were short of victuals and probably none too well clothed for the mountains. But they stood it. Crossing the watershed, they began to descend the valley of the Peneus into Thessaly. Here they discovered that their stock had fallen. When they began to skirt the Thessalian plain and came to the town of Gompli, they found that the inhabitants had shut the gates and sent for help to Pompeius. Cæsar directed his troops to take what they wanted. Gomphi accordingly was sacked; and the manners of the natives experienced a sudden and gratifying improvement. The advance guard of Pompeius being now at Larissa, further down the Peneus, Cæsar halted at a place called Pharsalus, on the

¹ Cicero himself wrote in a letter to Marcus Marius: 'I could not think of our success without horror' (*Ad Fam.*, VII, 3). The testimony to the spirit of the oligarchs is general and conclusive.

southern edge of the Thessalian plain, divided from Larissa by the ridge of Cynoscephalæ.¹

Pompeius soon appeared surmounting the ridge on the march from Larissa. He was over fifty thousand strong – a superiority of more than two to one – and his cavalry corps was seven times larger than Cæsar's. All the circumstances were in favour of a decisive action. Cæsar was still manœuvring rather mysteriously, shifting and re-shifting his position, as if with some unknown object. He asked his troops, however, if they were willing to fight. Sick of marching and digging, they jumped at the prospect! They implored him to get to business and have it over. He was not, however, perfectly ready. Then one morning he saw that Pompeius had made the crucial movement for which he had been waiting; and the word was given. The grand decision was at hand.

VIII

Both generals knew their business. Realizing the powers of Cæsar's veterans of the Gallic wars, the 'Wild Beasts' who had so astonished him at Dyrrachium, Pompeius meant to hold back his centre and right, while from his left he flung a net of cavalry round Cæsar's army. As for Cæsar's intentions, it was not obvious that they mattered. He would have to take what came. Before the battle opened, however, he gave a little paternal advice to his men which they faithfully obeyed.

Cæsar struck first. The 'Wild Beasts,' coming on at the run, got close in to the Pompeian lines, stopped, dressed their ranks, got their breath, and charged. Pompeius, watching the battle from his position far away on the right, saw his cavalry come wheeling round according to programme in one tremendous mass upon Cæsar's flank. Just before the blow fell, a line of men, a special reserve of the Cæsarians, who had hitherto been crouching down out of sight beyond Cæsar's rear, clutched their weapons, rose to their feet and began to hurry forward upon the rear of the Pompeian cavalry. 'Strike at their faces' had been Cæsar's dry order. A scrambling open combat between cavalry, caught unawares, and active

¹ For the site of the battle, see Dr. Rice Holmes, *Roman Republic*, III, 452-467. Mr. F. L. Lucas, *Annual of the British School at Athens*, No. XXIV, pp. 34-53; Professor Postgate, *J. R. S.*, XII (1922), p. 187f.

infantrymen stabbing might and main with the six-foot iron-headed Roman pilum, could have but one result. Pompeius had been so sure of himself and his measures that when, from the movement of the dust-clouds, he saw what was happening he was like a man stunned. The cloud stopped, recoiled, and began to travel back; it began to dissolve as the cavalry dissolved. Instead of Pompeius enveloping the Cæsarian army Cæsar was enveloping the Pompeian: for his special reserve ran on and attacked again in the rear of the Pompeian infantry.

Pompeius had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His luck had been wonderful, unique, unbroken. It now vanished like a burst bubble as it came into collision with Cæsar's Fortune. He went back to his tent sick at heart. There was no need to tell him what had happened. He understood everything. Almost the only bitter thing he is reported to have said at any time was his savage remark now that the men who had sneered at him most for not wanting to fight Cæsar were the first to bolt when the crisis came.

Not until the fleeing and fighting rout burst into the camp, and even into his own tent, did Pompeius gather himself together. He took the road to Larissa, but did not stop there. Pressing on through the famous Vale of Tempe, he reached the sea at the mouth of the Peneus. There he dismissed his servants, telling them to go to Cæsar without fear, and surrender. He himself took ship and sailed to sea.

The next day, the tenth of August, twenty thousand men laid down their arms. The senators and high officers were treated as captured rebels. The rank and file were incorporated into the legions of Cæsar.

IX

Pompeius never came back. When the fugitives from Pharsalus held their council of war at Corcyra, no Pompeius was there. They had been unable to agree while he was present; they were still less able to agree while he was absent. From the moment when he ceased to command, their cause ceased to be one and united.

With infallible instinct Cæsar left the world to look after itself while he pursued Pompeius. Travelling fast with a small escort he tracked him from Lesbos to Cilicia, thence to Cyprus,

and finally to Alexandria. There he heard the whole story, how the ministers of Ptolemy, afraid either to help or to hurt such a man as Pompeius, had meanly and miserably murdered him. The head was produced in proof, together with Pompeius' signet ring. Cæsar was an Italian, with an Italian's emotional nature. He turned in horror from the head, remembering what it had been and thinking of the great and dramatic fall of Pompeius. The signet ring, with tears, he accepted.

Cæsar had not acted from romantic motives in following Pompeius to Egypt, but he had, nevertheless, taken tremendous risks in travelling with so small a force. The court which had murdered Pompeius now made a stealthy and determined effort to do away with Cæsar also. The conqueror of Gaul was very nearly caught napping. Only the nervous fussiness of his confidential valet saved the situation. Cæsar was besieged in the palace of Alexandria, and had to be rescued by a relief expedition organized by Mithradates of Pergamus, a son of Mithradates the Great. History might have been considerably changed had young Mithradates taken a different view of his duty and interests.

But the risks of rashness had been smaller than the risks of caution. Cæsar had completed the really essential work; he had forced Pompeius out of the competition and destroyed him by an effectual pursuit. Besides this fact all other considerations were trifles. The big work was done. He returned at leisure through Asia Minor, fought the five days' campaign of Zela, rewarded Mithradates of Pergamus with his ancestral kingdom of Pontus and returned to Italy. He had been absent twenty months.

He was needed. The great machine of government, which in earlier and cruder ages had proceeded with ponderous simplicity, unhelped, like an automaton, now called for the constant active attentions of an intelligent supervisor, adjusting and controlling its imperfectly co-ordinated complexities. He found himself now a magistrate with an extraordinary farrago of powers. Almost immediately after the death of Pompeius he had been appointed Dictator till further notice and given the tribunician power, the power of peace and war, and half a dozen smaller rights, the assorted nature of which shows conclusively how far he was from possessing any

complete or coherent theory of monarchy. He was still only the leader of the *populares*, the protagonist of the Assembly against the senate.¹ His status was experimental. Neither he nor any one else could predict its final form.

X

The first task of Cæsar upon his return from the east was to undertake the final suppression of the revolted oligarchs. In seven months he had organized an expeditionary force, transported it to Africa, and destroyed their power at the battle of Thapsus. With very few exceptions Cæsar readily granted amnesty to all who asked for it. The last irreconcilables were driven to take refuge, like Sertorius a generation before, in the Spanish peninsula, where they lived the life of sea-kings.

Cæsar's whole aim was reconciliation. He had never wanted a civil war; and now that his victory was demonstrable and unmistakable he wanted above all things to persuade his foes to sit down in peace with him. The object of his policy, from beginning to end, had been the achievement of certain reforms. He was now enabled to carry them out; but he would much have preferred to do so in an atmosphere of agreement, if agreement were possible; but at any rate, in an atmosphere of toleration and peace. He seemed to some extent to have obtained this. The old set of *optimates* – where they survived – chafed, but made no serious attempt to oppose. Even so enlightened a man as Cicero had only the vaguest idea of why Cæsar wanted reforms or what good they would do. He was witty at the expense of Cæsar's reform of the calendar; but after all, if he objected to the star Lyra 'rising according to the edict' of a dictator, nothing had ever prevented the senate from supplying a free republican law for it to rise by. It was not the faults of Cæsar that the *optimates* objected to, but his virtues.

The reform of the calendar – one of the most famous of Cæsar's acts – has indeed a symbolic or typical quality about it. The senatorial June, through centuries of neglect, had been well on the way to find itself in December. It was typical of Cæsar to restore the Roman year to accuracy. It was

¹ 'You successfully opposed and overset the faction of the nobility,' the pseudo-Sallust wrote, 'and rescued the Roman people from the yoke of slavery.' This was probably Cæsar's own view of what he had done – not the overthrow of the republic.

typical of Cicero to suggest that such an act was 'tyranny.' And in this is contained in brief the entire story of the antagonism between the senate and Cæsar.

On his return to Rome after the campaign of Thapsus, Cæsar celebrated his triumph; or rather four triumphs on four successive days—over the Gauls, over Ptolemy and Egypt, over Pharnaces and Pontus, and over Juba and Africa. Like Sulla, he refrained from claiming any triumph for victories in the civil war over his own countrymen. The axle-tree of the triumphal car broke, so that Cæsar only arrived at the Capitol after nightfall. He was lighted up the steps by forty elephants carrying torches. The share-out for the army was immense; and the poorer of the civil population also came in for a substantial bonus. The whole of Rome was entertained at twenty-five thousand tables and treated to spectacles of the most thrilling magnificence, including an elephant fight (twenty-five a side) and a sea-fight with real water: events which it is safe to say would leave a modern audience gasping.

This having been finished, Cæsar took up the serious work which was awaiting his attention.

XI

Almost immediately after the battle of Thapsus, Cæsar's position had been further defined. The Assembly¹ bestowed upon him the annual dictatorship for ten years, the powers of a censor and the right to nominate candidates for office. As he already had the tribunician power for life he now held a remarkable collection of powers, which show signs that he had been thinking carefully over the whole subject and had begun to see what he needed. As dictator he was head of the Roman military system, as pontifex maximus he was head of the Roman religious system, as holder of tribunician power he had the power of prohibition and intervention in the interests of the people, as holder of censorial power he had control of the composition of the senate. By the concentration of all these offices in one person he certainly was placed in a position to regulate the machine.²

¹ Botsford, *Roman Assemblies*, p. 451.

² For the whole subject, Marsh, *Founding of the Roman Empire* (1927), p. 153 etc.

The legislative and administrative programme which he began was too extensive to be more than indicated here. As dictator his policy made permanent the system by which the Roman plebs had been reorganized in a military guild independent of the so-called 'Servian' classes of the electoral Assembly, or the ward organization of the legislative Assembly. He made provision not only for his own discharged veterans, but for the poorer class in general by a scheme of land-settlements. As pontifex maximus he reformed the calendar. With his censorial power he filled the vacancies among the senators and he increased the number of annual magistrates. The practical aspect of this latter measure was to break the old closed ring of the oligarchy, and to turn it into an 'aristocracy of office' sufficiently numerous to be capable of filling the administrative posts of the Roman empire. For this, in particular, he was never forgiven by his foes. The army they hated. The land-settlements they loathed. The calendar they derided. But the breaking of the closed ring was a different matter. From that moment they began to plot against his life.

It had long been obvious to Cæsar that he could not imitate Sulla and resign. His life would not be safe; and it had become an indispensable necessity to the state that the pilot should keep his hand continually and steadily on the tiller. Hence, he had to provide for a successor and a system of succession. This was a totally different thing from picking lieutenants and deputies. Dashing bucks like Clodius and Curio did excellently as political organizers; the drunken libertine, M. Antonius, was a faithful and capable soldier. But Cæsar needed another Cæsar. Cassius Longinus had already set Spain in a blaze by his dishonesty and tyranny. It needed Cæsar's presence to stamp out the revolt. When he returned to Rome after the battle of Munda the rubicund face of M. Antonius did indeed appear in the car by the side of the busy and talkative Dictator; but now with them appeared a new figure—a fragile, girlish youth, with delicate features and a strangely enigmatic expression, calm, cold and observant. It was the boy Gaius Octavius, Cæsar's grand-nephew, the grandson of Cæsar's old friend Balbus and of Cæsar's sister Julia. It was the future Augustus.

XII

Something amenable, which is still to be traced in the portraits of Augustus – a disposition to listen – may have endeared him to a man who was certainly a great talker, and whose talk could rise to the level of his listeners. That Julius talked and Octavius listened is fairly certain from the nature of the case. Julius felt that his grand-nephew understood, for he adopted him as his son and bequeathed to him not only his name, but the vast wealth which he had gradually accumulated to finance his task.

No other problem was so difficult as this of the succession; because the new dignity as yet had not even a name. Octavius was a silent but reflective witness of the last eleven months of his grand-uncle's life. More than once Cæsar carefully tested public opinion. On the famous occasion when Antonius twice offered him the crown the public feeling left no room for doubt. It was against the idea of monarchy. This complicated matters for Cæsar. Either some method must be found of transmitting, with safety, the new dignity from one holder to another, or the Roman dominion would dissolve beneath the strain of continual civil war. Cæsar's own feeling seems to have been that the best model was offered by a hereditary monarchy of the Hellenistic type, in which the candidates for office were circumscribed by membership of a sacred caste. It is not probable that he intended to follow the model with slavish exactitude. He had his own ideas; and above all he was willing that the new dignity should evolve its own especial features from the circumstances amid which it arose. . . . Hence, up to the very eve of his fall, he had decided nothing. The whole situation still remained indeterminate. It was left for Octavius to think out the practical problems, and to make the great decisions. Perhaps Octavius was, by temperament, the better fitted for the task.

Of one thing we may be sure: Cæsar was not contemplating any dignity of the kind which is imposed by force upon an unwilling people. He still kept up the ordinary habits and customs of a Roman of the class into which he had been born. He was warned that conspiracy was afoot. Deliberately, and on principle, he declined a bodyguard. To be murdered,

he said, was not nearly so bad as to go continually in fear of murder. From the event, it is clear that he was quite unconscious of being a Dionysius. He had no secret intelligence department. He did not know that Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius had formed a conspiracy which now counted over sixty members. He was evidently unaware that two of his chief officers, Decimus Brutus and Gaius Trebonius, belonged to it.

On the fifteenth of March – the famous Ides of March in the year 44 B.C. – he attended the senate as usual. Even on the way thither he was warned of his danger. A Greek, Artemidorus, a Cnidian,¹ knowing that Cæsar would not read a long message but would hand it on to his secretaries, wrote out a brief clear warning and put it into Cæsar's hand. But Cæsar, on account of the frequent interruption of those around him, never had an opportunity of reading it and he walked into the senate still holding in his hand the message that might have saved his life. M. Antonius, the consul, was detained in conversation near the door. As Cæsar took his seat, the senators rose. A certain Tillius Cimber had a petition to present and a number of senators came with him as if to add their persuasions. Cæsar was unable to consent to the petition. As they crowded round him to press the request he maintained his refusal. They pressed still closer. He said: 'This is violence!' Tillius Cimber, kneeling at his feet, now seized his robe and pulled it down from his shoulders and Casca struck the first blow from behind. It was not a serious one. Cæsar instantly grappled with him, crying out: 'Scoundrel Casca! – what do you mean by this?' The senators who were not in the plot remained paralysed with horror and amazement while the conspirators finished their work. He fought them vigorously to the last, calling vainly for help the while, but after receiving twenty-three wounds – the last from Marcus Brutus – he covered his face with his robe and fell. . . . He fell and died at the base of a statue of Pompeius. But for his own earnest desire for conciliation the statue would not have been there – nor would most of his murderers.

Brutus had a speech ready to address to the assembled

¹ Cæsar had shown especial favour to the Cnidians as a mark of appreciation for the Cnidian writer Theopompus.

senate; but the members did not stay to hear it. The house emptied with surprising rapidity. Antonius himself fled with the rest. The news spread. Shops began to shut. Excited spectators began to rush to the scene. The conspirators retreated in good order, proclaiming as they went the Restoration of Freedom. Cæsar lay still in his blood-stained robe – destined to be even more powerful in death than he had ever been in his life.

XIII

Antonius was the first to recover. That same afternoon he seized Cæsar's treasury and personal papers. Lepidus, the Dictator's Master of the Horse, occupied the Campus Martius with troops.

The oligarchs were already in a quandary. The murder of Cæsar had been an amateur piece of assassination,¹ typical of the ignorant incompetence which distinguished the acts of the oligarchy. At Antonius' demand and on Cicero's motion, the senate passed an act of Oblivion and Indemnity, confirmed all Cæsar's acts and granted him a public funeral. Antonius left the senate to walk down to the Forum, where Cæsar's body was already laid out. A vast concourse of the people had assembled.

The act of oblivion meant nothing, since nobody was going to implement it: but the confirmation of Cæsar's acts meant everything. Antonius ascended the rostra. There he made that famous speech the record of which Shakespeare has put into English with only a little expansion and amplification – a honeyed, bland, insinuating speech, carefully and thoughtfully calculated to stir the passions of the audience. By the time he held up Cæsar's bloodstained robe, pierced through and through with the dagger-strokes, the moment had come. The infuriated crowd rose: the benches were torn up, the market stalls pulled down, and the people whom, for so many years, Cæsar had led and organized, started to conduct his funeral themselves. The pyre of Cæsar was erected and lit on that historic scene where the Regia, the ancient palace of the kings of Rome, looked towards the Rostra, the stage of a

¹ Out of twenty-three wounds only one (the second) was mortal. A centurion would have frowned at such swordsmanship.

thousand dramas of the republic. While it burned the slayers lay close. They were not the most popular persons in Rome that day.

One month later the very young man who was to be Augustus arrived in Rome. He had been in Macedonia pursuing his studies when the startling news of Cæsar's murder reached him. Many of Cæsar's supporters had urged him to pick up the mantle of Cæsar; his own family thought the heritage too dangerous even to touch; but he had his own ideas. He came now to Rome purely and simply (so he said) to claim the property left by Cæsar. It was still far from obvious that Cæsar's estate involved Cæsar's political position.

Octavius had the same kind of genius for diplomacy that Shelley had for poetry or Mozart for music. Even at eighteen his intuitions were sure. After Octavius, accompanied by witnesses, had filed his claim with the prætor, he proceeded to anticipate the legal result by paying out of his own pocket for the celebration of Cæsar's annual festival of the battle of Thapsus. It pretty well cleaned him out and most of his immediate relatives also; but the point was too valuable to miss.

The rubicund Antonius could not take him seriously. An interview between the two did not last long and was not particularly cordial. Antonius impatiently told him that he was too young to know what he was doing. This, of course, was just what Octavius had expected. He had never supposed that his claim would be welcome to Antonius. He continued to keep it before the sympathetic eyes of the public, while at the same time he cultivated the leading oligarchs, who were only too glad to see a rift between him and Antonius. Even Cicero thawed. And this, too, perhaps Octavius had foreseen.

Antonius had intended to possess himself of the whole of Cæsar's treasure and to succeed to his power. But although he overawed the senate, bribed his fellow-consul, terrorised his opponents, and even repealed laws of Cæsar which stood in his way, he could not altogether block the claims of Octavius. He forced through a law giving himself the governorship of the Gauls for five years – that is to say, a virtual dictatorship. But even his own guardsmen insisted on the reconciliation of Antonius with Octavius. The name of Cæsar could not only paralyse the senatorial oligarchy; it could still control Antonius.

The prospect of a perpetual dictatorship of Marcus Antonius brought Cicero back into politics. On September the second he delivered in the senate a carefully phrased speech of remonstrance, the 'First Philippic,' which ended by reminding Antonius of the fate of Cæsar. Antonius answered by publishing a pamphlet in which he openly charged Cicero with responsibility for Cæsar's murder. In a speech about the same time he also declared that there was no room for himself and the murderers of Cæsar in the same world. Cicero replied with another pamphlet, a brilliant, scurrilous and venomous attack upon Antonius, ending with an invitation to the world to treat Antonius as Cæsar had been treated. This pamphlet, the 'Second Philippic' was not published in the ordinary way. It was secretly circulated: but Antonius almost certainly knew of its existence¹ and was deeply enraged. From that time forward the breach between the two was irreconcilable.

This situation admirably suited Octavius. He turned instinctively towards Cicero and the oligarchs—not, indeed, with warm affection, but certainly with a cold and far-seeing hope.

XIV

The real state of the case was unmasked when the legions from Macedonia arrived at Brundisium. Antonius hurried thither only to meet with an unpleasant surprise. Instead of the four legions of enthusiastic supporters on whom he was relying to take possession of Gaul, and to hold it, he found only three legions of highly critical and unenthusiastic persons. After much difficulty he got them upon the Adriatic road to Gaul.

Octavius had been before him. A direct test had proved the degree to which Cæsar, though dead, yet reigned over the minds of his followers. A tour of Campania and the offer of a heavy premium for recruits had raised a considerable body of ardent Cæsarian veterans, old hands who had learnt their trade under Julius. Secret agents had then met the Macedonian

¹ Rice Holmes, *Architect of the Roman Empire*, pp. 198–199, where it is indicated that the pamphlet may have been published in November, 44 B.C., after Antonius had left Rome: but there is no evidence that it ever was published. As we know that Atticus and Marcus Brutus received copies, the very slight evidence seems to imply secret circulation.

legions at Brundisium, distributing propagandist pamphlets among them. The fact that Octavius was Cæsar's heir and representative had already predisposed the minds of the legionaries in his favour. News of the bonus he was paying in Campania clinched the matter.

Hence Antonius marched north with a much diminished force. One of the legions – together with another which subsequently arrived – deserted and joined Octavius. All this time Octavius was in private communication with Cicero, who was hesitating, worrying and doubting down in Campania. The conduct of Octavius was entirely illegal. He had not the slightest right to possess an army at all. But since he did, the opportunity was too good to miss. After more hesitation Cicero made up his mind. He plunged into the political fray.

XV

On his arrival in Cisalpine Gaul, Antonius sent to remind Decimus Brutus that by the recent plebiscite he, Antonius, was the legal governor of the province. Decimus replied with an announcement that he intended to hold on to it in virtue of the commissions formerly given him, and therewith shut himself up in Mutina and left the next move to Antonius. Octavius and Cicero had already exhorted him to stand by while they organized rescue. As soon as the news arrived that Antonius was actually blockading Mutina, Cicero began his campaign. His Third, Fourth and Fifth Philippics induced the senate to grant pro-prætorian powers to Octavius and to take over the financial responsibilities which he had undertaken towards the troops. Armed with this, Octavius at once started for the north. He was followed almost at once by the consul Aulus Hirtius.

Now, Hirtius was one of the men whom Julius himself had nominated as consuls for the year, and who (since the acts of Julius had been confirmed) stepped automatically into office despite the anti-Cæsarian reaction. Hirtius was the intimate friend to whom Julius had once entrusted the important work of writing the eighth book of the *Commentaries on the Gallic War*. Octavius, therefore, was in the hands of a friend and a fellow Cæsarean. Together the two waited the approach of the second consul, C. Vibius Pansa, also a Cæsarean, whose

arrival would bring their forces up to more adequate strength. What the senate had done, therefore, was to authorize and finance the military operations of Cæsar's legal heir against Cæsar's rebellious chief lieutenant. Its hope that somehow the oligarchs would emerge victorious from such a contest was a dangerous one to entertain.

At first there really did seem to be some ground for imagining that the Cæsareans might destroy one another. The approach of Pansa led to a series of military operations culminating in the desperate battle of Forum Gallorum in which Antonius was beaten, but Pansa was fatally wounded. One was thus put out. A few days later, a second battle took place before Mutina. Antonius was again beaten, but Hirtius was killed. A second was thus put out – for Pansa soon after died – and Octavius remained the surviving power, facing a beaten Antonius.

But the madness of the oligarchs – who only needed to be given a knife to cut their own throats with it – was now evident. The senate refused Cicero's modest suggestions of a second-class triumph – an 'ovation' – for Octavius. It reduced the financial support already accorded to him, and directed him to hand over the legions of Hirtius and Pansa to Decimus Brutus and to accept Decimus as his superior officer. Octavius replied by neglecting to assist Decimus to pursue Antonius, who was now in full retreat westward. The unfortunate Decimus had no cavalry; his transport oxen had been eaten and his own men were underfed. While Antonius conducted a skilful retreat out of an impossible situation and joined his ally Lepidus in Transalpine Gaul, Octavius looked thoughtfully on.

The last moves in the intricate game rapidly followed.

The old Cæsarean legions flatly refused to serve under Decimus Brutus. They wanted the heir of Julius. But Octavius had no firm status or legal office. His pro-prætorship was far too small a thing to be of any use to him. He needed the consulship.

Octavius had begun to understand the peculiar instrument which Julius had created. The Cæsarean army was a living body, with a real – even an intense – corporate life and public opinion of its own. When he sent a deputation of centurions

to Rome, to demand the consulship for himself, and full financial support for the army, he ensured that the army should take the refusal of these things as a direct insult to itself. To break camp and take the road to Rome was then easy. When he pitched camp outside the walls he received an enthusiastic welcome from the Cæsarean partisans. There was practically no opposition. On the nineteenth of August he was elected to the consulship in company with Quintus Pedius.

The Assembly confirmed the legal adoption of Gaius Octavius by Gaius Julius Cæsar. Gaius Octavius at once became Gaius Julius Cæsar Octavianus and the possessor of all the resources bequeathed to him by his grand-uncle. The murderers of Cæsar were put on trial, condemned in their absence, and sentenced.

Meanwhile, a great reunion of the leading Cæsareans had taken place. Asinius Pollio, the governor of Spain, Munatius Plancus, of northern Gaul, Lepidus, of Provincial Gaul, and Antonius, the would-be governor of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, all met together. Thirty-two legions surrounded their secret counsels. Against this, Octavian had no more than eleven. It was not long since he had had nothing. But the time had come for peace and co-operation. The army itself, with no uncertain voice, told its chiefs that it wished them to work together. The heir of Julius was ready for reconciliation. On a peninsula near Bononia the three leaders met. Octavian, Antonius and Lepidus formed a new Committee of Three, a new Triumvirate. On the twenty-eighth of November, in the year 43, Rome awoke to find the posters up, and once more the days of Sulla seemed to have returned. Three hundred of the oligarchs were proscribed, outlawed and sentenced to death.¹

Among the names was that of Marcus Tullius Cicero.

¹ Three hundred senators and two thousand equites. Compare the figures for the Sullan proscription on p. 302.

BOOK IV
THE PRINCIPATE

CHAPTER XVII

AUGUSTUS, AND THE GRAND COMPOSITION
(43 B.C. - A.D. 14)

I

It is important to bear in mind that the new era began, not with the general reconciliation which Julius had desired, but with the most murderous proscription known to Roman history. It is possible that mere passion played some part in the motives of Marcus Antonius; but Octavian had no passion. The cold determination which took its place proceeded by calculated steps; he played the game of statesmanship much in the spirit of a card-player who has no personal preference for any particular suit and no hesitation in accepting the current rules. A familiar story tells us how Augustus, many years later, unexpectedly caught one of his embarrassed grandsons reading a volume of Cicero. The emperor took it, and for long remained thoughtfully perusing it. At last he gave it back to the criminal, merely saying: 'He was a great man, my boy, and a sincere lover of his country.' . . . For after all, it had been six of one and half a dozen of the other. Octavian had acted first - that was all.

II

From the moment when the triumvirs entered Rome, the intervening time was wiped out, and the rule of Cæsar once more prevailed. The oligarchy had made a bad exchange in giving the large-hearted, deep-minded Julius for the cold Octavian, the rubicund Antony, and the treacherous Lepidus. But it richly deserved them. It could not deny the preamble

with which they headed their proscription list. Conciliation had proved a failure. Since conspiracy and assassination had been the reward even of Julius, what might lesser men expect? So they proposed to make the world safe for reformers.

We must abolish, too, any idea that Rome lay prostrate beneath the feet of Tyranny. Bitter as the strife had been, Romans still had views of their own, and expressed them; and—as is so often the case—what men hesitated to say, women said. Among the special methods of taxation adopted for filling the Treasury was a tax upon the property of women. A list of 1,400 was prepared; and these were required to make a return of their property, and to be prepared to pay according to the assessment officially made.

The women promptly protested, and by the mediation of Antony's mother and Octavian's sister, the triumvirs received a public deputation. No man dared to risk getting himself into trouble by speaking on their behalf, so Hortensia, the daughter of the famous orator, Cicero's rival, spoke. Evidently the art of speaking was not a gift personally peculiar to Hortensius, but was cultivated generally in the family, for Hortensia's speech was electrifying. She wound up by a peroration in which she expressed the readiness of all Roman women when confronted with the need of sacrifice on behalf of their country; but their profound objection to being taxed in order to enable their men folk to conduct civil war. Such a thing, she said, had not been demanded of them by Marius or Cinna nor even by Sulla, who first began these things; and yet the triumvirs claimed to be reformers. . . . The Committee hurriedly ordered their lictors to show the ladies out; but the applause and comments of the audience indicated that Hortensia had triumphed. The list was cut down from 1,400 to 400; and the required revenue was made up by raising the deficit from the male electorate—who, presumably, had let themselves in for it by applauding Hortensia.

The money was needed. The first act of the Committee, after settling into office, was to organize the punitive expedition against the murderers of Julius. Some were already dead, but the two principal leaders, Marcus Brutus in Macedonia and Cassius in Syria, were organizing an anti-Cæsarean power

that daily grew stronger. The situation was very much as it had been after the first Spanish campaign of Julius. The Roman dominion was once more split into eastern and western halves. Instead of Pompeius, however, Brutus and Cassius were now organizing an east that was arrayed against a west led by the Committee of Three.

The civil government was handed over to Lepidus, while Antonius and Octavian were away on campaign.

III

An advance guard of eight legions was thrown into Macedonia, and took the road eastward. Twenty more, concentrated at Brundisium, under the personal command of Octavian and Antonius, were ferried across the water, in the teeth of all efforts to prevent it. About the same time the oligarchic leaders, fully informed of the progress of events, set out on their march westward. The two armies were bound to meet mid-way, east of Thessalonica. The Cæsarean advance guard, having occupied a narrow defile on the main road, waited for the enemy to appear.

At last they came. They were fewer in numbers than the Cæsareans, but far stronger in cavalry, and they had a fleet. The progress of the fleet along the coast caused an immediate retirement of the Cæsarean advance guard, which fell back towards Philippi. There it stopped, holding a defile which was too narrow to be forced. Cassius met this problem by a bold detour in difficult country. After an arduous circuit, he came out at Philippi, on the flank of the Cæsareans, who fell back still further to Amphipolis. Here they were caught up and reinforced by the rapid advance of Antonius with the main body, who arrived at Amphipolis, pushed through, and confronted Cassius at Philippi.

Octavian had stayed behind at Dyrrachium, ill. The news which reached him was that Antonius was in a difficult position, with inadequate water and deficient supplies. Brutus and Cassius showed no particular wish to fight. If the situation could be dragged out till supplies ran short, Antonius would be forced to retreat. Octavian crawled from his sick-bed, got into a carriage, and hastened across the mountains as fast as he could travel.

The battles of Philippi were engineering battles of the type which Cæsar's *Commentaries* have made familiar to us. Antonius dug his way round the flank of Cassius, who responded by counter-works. While Antonius was preparing to attack, the troops of Brutus, without orders, attacked Octavian, drove him out of his camp, and captured it. Antonius meanwhile was successful in storming the defensive works of Cassius. The latter, believing that all was lost, and unaware of the success of Brutus, killed himself. This was the first battle of Philippi. (October 23rd, 42 B.C.)

Three weeks passed in digging and manœuvring. Antonius resumed his attempt to envelop the position, while Brutus extended his entrenchments to prevent it. At last, seeing that he was in danger of having his supplies cut off, Brutus was forced to fight. He was beaten, and his retreat intercepted. The next morning, accepting the inevitable, he killed himself. His troops surrendered. The other leaders either followed the example of Brutus, or were executed. The whole military force which centred round the assassins of Cæsar was thus destroyed, reclaimed or dispersed, and in this way the vengeance for Julius was accomplished.¹

IV

The battles of Philippi destroyed all hope of the triumph of the oligarchy. They sealed the success of the Committee of Three. The centre of interest was shifted. What would the Three do with their success?

They themselves were none too sure. The first thing was to demobilize the army. Some forty-seven legions, numbering over two hundred thousand men, were present in Macedonia after the battle of Philippi. Many of these were men fighting for the duration of the war, whose service in some cases had already been extended beyond the normal. These were now given their discharge, and the whole establishment reduced to eleven legions. The next step would be to complete the reduction of the east. The eleven legions were therefore apportioned between Antonius and Octavian, and – without consulting Lepidus – some re-arrangement of the provinces was determined

¹ For the battles of Philippi, see Rice Holmes, *Architect of the Roman Empire*, pp. 80-81, with map and diagram.

upon. Antonius then started for Asia, while Octavian returned to Italy to superintend the allotment of land pensions to the demobilized troops.

It is just possible that Antonius may have smiled a little to himself at the thought of Octavian struggling with the problems of Italy. But the fact that Octavian did grapple with the hardest and least grateful of all the tasks arising out of the civil war was precisely the very fact which was to give him his later prestige and to ensure his future. Italy was in chaos. The demobilized Cæsarean veterans expected to be presented with the pick of Italian land which had been promised them. The landowners insisted that full compensation should be paid for all land taken. Octavian had no money. Every one was unreasonable; and the representatives of Antonius added to the confusion by pointing out how much better he would have done if *he* had been in charge of affairs. Enterprising legionaries seized estates which they felt ought to have been allotted to them, and threw out the enraged legal owners. Octavian was in the position of a representative of law and order who is helplessly carried away by a crowd over which he has no control. Every one considered it his fault. Meanwhile, Sextus Pompeius, the Pirate Chief, was in possession of Sicily, and intercepting the corn supplies. Starvation threatened the city; neglect threatened the country. In the disorder and uncertainty no one could settle down to work.

This impossible situation was clarified by the rapid development of a quarrel between Octavian and the representatives of Antonius. By polarizing the chaos, the quarrel separated Roman opinion into two distinct parties; after which the final result was reached through that cold, tactful diplomacy on Octavian's part which gradually drew over to his field the preponderant force of public opinion. He realized that the army, as a body, really desired peace and really was tired of war; and he was careful to make it clear that his policy was one of conciliation, reason and reconstruction. He patiently explained that he and Antonius were allies, not enemies, and that he was undertaking the work of settlement in agreement with his colleagues. By infinite patience and steady propaganda, Octavian transformed himself from an unpopular person to one who, if not loved, was distinctly approved.

Even so he was obliged to use force to obtain the complete control to which, by the agreement, he was entitled. Fulvia, the wife of Marcus Antonius, and Lucius Antonius his brother, with their partisans, he shut into the town of Perugia, and there besieged them. It was a bitter though a short civil war. Perugia held out until starved into surrender. By the intervention of the troops of Octavian, the rank and file of the defending garrison was spared, and the ordinary citizens of Perugia suffered no harm; but the captured senators and knights were nearly all of them executed. The calm and unimpassioned ruthlessness of Octavian would grant no appeal. He saw it to be expedient to make a severe public example of men who were guilty of gratuitous rebellion; and before the eyes of the assembled armies he made it.

Antonius had done nothing to help either his own party or that of Octavian. He had spent for other purposes the money that had been earmarked for the land-settlement of the troops, and he was in no position to interfere. He seemed, however, singularly lacking in enthusiasm at the way in which Octavian had reduced Italy to comparative order. Any one would have thought that he was a little disappointed at Octavian's success.

V

Hanging all this while like a dead weight upon the arm of Octavian was the power of Sextus Pompeius. Ever since the battle of Thapsus six years before, Sextus had been fighting for his own hand. It was a strange destiny that appointed the son of Pompeius Magnus to be the most famous and successful pirate who ever ruled the waters of the Mediterranean. His conquest of Sicily, in 43 B.C., made him a power to be reckoned with. He controlled the sea-routes by which the corn-supply of Rome reached the capital, and he was thus able to put irresistible pressure upon Italy. While his military strength was not yet sufficient to enable him to contend with the Committee on land, it was rapidly growing; and he could be a useful ally or a dangerous enemy to any one of the three.

Antonius was the first to take advantage of these facts. The possessor of Egypt, Phœnicia and the Asiatic Greek ports could put a powerful fighting fleet upon the sea, and had no reason to fear Sextus. A coalition of Antonius and Sextus

might be able to overcome Octavian; and yet Antonius would still be in a position to hold his own with Sextus. Octavian therefore at once took prudent steps to conciliate Sextus. The latter was by no means unwilling to be on friendly terms with the master of Italy, Gaul and Spain. It was arranged that a marriage should take place between Octavian and the sister of Sextus's wife Scribonia, the daughter of Scribonius Libo. The marriage was a political one; but it has its interesting personal side, for Scribonia became the mother of that strange, erratic, brilliant, somewhat mysterious person, Julia.

The success of Octavian was a cause of some concern to Antonius. Prolonged and intricate negotiations followed. The main difficulty was to convince Antonius that Octavian both hated the idea of war, and yet was perfectly ready and willing to fight if driven to it. As soon as he was certain that the army in Italy and Gaul would support Octavian, Antonius allowed himself to be persuaded. A formal reconciliation took place, accompanied by a fresh delimitation of their spheres of influence. Antonius was to have all the east; Lepidus was to retain Africa; while to Octavian should fall Dalmatia, Italy, Gaul, Spain and Sardinia. It was moreover arranged that Octavian should assert a claim to Sicily, and make whatsoever arrangements seemed best with Sextus Pompeius. All this was a distinct advance in the power of Octavian.

Sextus instantly tightened his naval stranglehold on the food supply of Rome, with alarming results. It became necessary to hold a personal conference with him. Sextus wanted a seat on the Committee of Three, in the place of Lepidus; but this was something that they would not grant. The Committee was a Cæsarean body, a grand council of the Cæsarean party; the son of Pompeius Magnus could not possibly be admitted to it. At last they agreed upon a set of terms which released the corn-supply, and in return granted Sextus the control of Sicily and Peloponnesus, together with the consulship. But these terms were very imperfectly carried out. They did little more than keep Sextus amused while Octavian was preparing the ships necessary for his destruction. A vast armada was built. As so often had happened before, the contest became a struggle between the resources of civilization and those of anti-civilization; and civilization won. Octavian

placed bigger and better ships on the water, and more of them; he fitted them out more abundantly; and he provided a greater leader of men – M. Vipsanius Agrippa – to command them. Antonius, as a sign of good feeling, lent additional ships from his Asiatic fleets.

In spite of reverses and ill-fortune, they fought their way into Sicily. Agrippa forced Sextus to fight a decisive sea-battle at Naulochus, beat him, and sank, captured, or burnt the greater part of his fleet. Sextus, with a few ships, fled for the open sea, and passed out of the main stream of history. The victory at Naulochus was the third great critical episode in the career of Octavian. It left him master of Sicily and Africa, as well as of the whole of Italy, Gaul, Spain and Dalmatia. A few feeble attempts of Lepidus to assert himself were answered by his expulsion from the Committee. His place was not filled. Octavian declared that the Committee was at an end. The time was approaching for the restoration of normal conditions. He spoke for himself, but said that he thought he could speak also for Antonius. In thanks for this declaration, the Assembly voted to Octavian for life the personal inviolability of a tribune: in other words, it permanently guaranteed his personal safety with its sovereign authority.

VI

The idea of the restoration of normal constitutional government, the 'restoration of the republic,' was one that would strike different men in different ways. To the stalwarts of the *optimates* it could have but one meaning – the restoration of the supremacy of the senatorial oligarchy. To the average Cæsarian, it equally implied the supremacy of the Assembly. But nearly all of them, with the experience of the recent past to guide them, qualified their own opinions with some admission of the necessity for a Protector of the Republic – a power (call him what we will) that would control the machine and make good its eccentricities. Octavian realized that the Roman world was ready to make very large concessions to this necessity so long as it was not called monarchy. The Roman was a man capable of facing vast changes of substance, as long as his prejudices were consulted regarding manner, form and style. Octavian had no objection. He had himself a natural sympathy

with this point of view. Some kink in his own mind made him fond of euphemisms.

But to carry through the new policy, as he now foresaw it, the whole control must be centred in his own hands. M. Antonius was an impossible partner, and a still more impossible alternative. Antonius was no thinker. The first preliminary requisite was that he must go.

Antonius played into Octavian's hands. While the latter was struggling with Sextus Pompeius, Antonius was engaged in carrying out the great Parthian campaign which Julius had projected. Although he learnt from the fate of Crassus, and avoided the crude disaster which had overtaken the Roman arms at Carrhæ, his campaign was none the less a failure: and this failure was a most serious political fact. It diminished his prestige just when he most needed it. For five years after the fall of Sextus Pompeius a struggle for primacy was taking place between Octavian and Antonius. The Roman people would sooner or later have to choose between two different types of protector; and in this interval they had the opportunity of studying the alternatives. Octavian was successful in subduing and organizing his new province of Dalmatia and in illustrating how completely, with how little disturbance of the peaceful routine of Roman life, he could accomplish the work. Antonius showed in all his actions that he was still the man who had offered the crown to Julius. He seemed to have slipped almost unconsciously into the position of inheriting the Hellenistic and monarchical side of the Julian policy. What Julius had definitely dropped, Antonius continued. He was basing his power more and more upon the vast wealth of servile Egypt; he was foreshadowing the creation of an Asiatic monarchy with the centre of its power in the east. He awoke the instinctive prejudice and jealousy of the Roman. His marriage to Cleopatra clinched the dislike aroused by his general policy, and turned the larger part of the western world against him.

Little as the conventional idea of Antony and Cleopatra may correspond to the real truth about that astonishing pair, it does define the situation as it was thrown upon the screen of Roman opinion through the warming and distorting medium of Roman prejudice. Italians listened with horror and disgust

to the scandalous revelations of voluptuous passion, the full details of which were poured into their perhaps not altogether unwilling ears. Antonius might jeer at the self-imputed righteousness of his countrymen: but modern electors, in similar circumstances, would probably share the same hostility to Asiatic manners and methods,¹ and would express it in the same way. The agents of Octavian had no difficulty in mobilizing Italian opinion in his favour. Antonius was not without supporters. As the time drew near, both the consuls for the year and a full third of the senate seceded from Octavian and left Italy to join Antonius. When, at last, a state of war was actually proclaimed, Octavian consulted the feeling of his countrymen by proclaiming it against Cleopatra only. But the large majority of ordinary citizens were wholeheartedly for Octavian, as the heir of Julius and the embodiment of European tradition. Everywhere throughout the west, Roman citizens took an oath of allegiance to him and accepted him as the representative of Rome. All were eager to see the new settlement – the permanent establishment of the reformed republic.

VII

When at last M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the victor of Naulochus, sailed from Tarentum with the first squadron of the western fleet, Antonius and the eastern fleet lay at Patræ on the western coast of Greece, with a supporting army of over a hundred thousand men stationed at various points, prepared to march as soon as the word came. Agrippa raided his communications and largely swept off the seas his tenders and supply vessels. When Octavian sailed from Brundisium with the main body of fighting ships, and the military transport, Antonius moved northward to meet him. After a little preliminary sparring they met at Actium, at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf.

Octavian dug in and held tight. He was far from being the equal of Antonius as a soldier, and he knew it. Vipsanius Agrippa, however, was a naval commander for whom Antonius possessed no counterpart. Agrippa proceeded to capture

¹ Even Octavian indulged in sarcasms about the eastern army being led by Cleopatra's lady's-maid, and so forth – the sort of popular prejudice that still survives in the form of jokes about fat babus, pashas and harems.

Patrae and the chain of provisioning ports that linked it with Actium, thus cutting off the eastern fleet from its supplies. He established so great an ascendancy at sea, that Antonius rapidly found himself penned into the Gulf, his troops, on low-lying and unhealthy ground, facing an enemy who was determined not to fight a decisive battle on land. Antonius, having received his training under the great Julius, knew when he was in an impossible position. He took the counsel of his advisers. Cleopatra held that his only chance was to beat Agrippa on the water. His Roman officers advised him to draw Octavian into the interior of Macedonia – the strategy of Julius against Pompeius. After thought, he took Cleopatra's advice, and prepared to fight a decisive battle at sea. If he could win it, well and good. If not, he would break through the opposing fleet and resume his freedom of action.

Disaffection, however, was rife. Some of the chief officers of Antonius deserted before the battle, and the fleet he led out to fight was untrustworthy. His plan was to envelop the western fleet with his right wing. It was never put into operation. Almost as soon as the action began on the right, the left wing returned to harbour without striking a blow, while a large part of the remaining ships surrendered to Agrippa. Antonius' own flagship was surrounded and taken. He had only time to escape into a lighter and faster ship, and to rejoin Cleopatra, whose squadron, manned by her own Egyptians, was loyal. They had been careful to retain their sails on board; and now, hoisting them, they made good their escape. Agrippa, who, according to custom, had left his sails on shore, could make no effective pursuit until they were far beyond his reach.¹

Something like a hundred thousand men surrendered to Octavian after the battle of Actium. The east, which had seemed so formidable, had collapsed almost at a touch. The surrendered fleets, for which Octavian had no use, were burned in the bay of Actium. Some of the Antonians were put to death, but most were spared. Twelve kings, or more, submitted to the power of the first magistrate of the new republic.

¹ The reader who is surprised at this account of the battle of Actium should consult Mr. W. W. Tarn's article in the *Journal of Roman Studies*, XXI (1931), pp. 173–199, where the full details are given.

VIII

One thing now remained to do.

Octavian's visit to Egypt was historic, and formed the last scene in a strange and romantic drama which poets have not failed to improve.

No room was left in the world for Marcus Antonius. He could neither fight nor flee. His men would not stand against a foe. He therefore died by his own hand. For Cleopatra the case was not quite the same. Octavian intended to annex Egypt. He had no desire for Cleopatra's death, and indeed for many reasons of policy he would have preferred that she should live and be seen by the people of Rome. But she came of a proud and vigorous stock who were too used to empire to live without it. She died soon after Antonius – how, it is not certainly known, but the most generally accepted belief is that it was by the bite of an asp, which she had kept in reserve for the express purpose. . . . So passed away the last of the Ptolemies that counted in the affairs of the world, and the last effort of ancient Egypt to dominate civilization.

Antonius was a man who had been great in adversity, a brave man and a skilful soldier, a generous fellow, a man of feeling rather than a man of thought. He did not know how to face good fortune as well as he had faced bad – he threw away in his days of prosperity the high repute for heroism that he had fairly won in his days of struggle and hardship.

IX

Of Octavian, the reverse might be said. In his days of struggle he had been ruthless and treacherous, with all the cold and thoughtful selfishness of a clever but timid man. He improved with prosperity. The safer he became, the kinder he grew; his coldness became an unimpassioned justice, his calculation a wise balancing of advantages, his neglect of high things became a grand simplicity. As the warm and comfortable light of success glowed ever stronger, men stared to see the curious transformation that came over him. Only when he had become master of the world could they see at length how perfectly he was fitted, even by his faults, for that high dignity. He was no propagandist, no doctrinaire. He had no opinions

that he very much wanted to force upon other men. . . . It was after his return from Egypt that the senate requested him to accept the honorary title of Augustus. He took it to himself; he sloughed off his old skin; Octavian the betrayer of Cicero was forgotten; Augustus lingered in men's memories like some pleasant fragrance remembered by moonlight, cool, pleasant, reminiscent. Few men left a fairer repute to posterity.

On the 13th, 14th, and 15th of August, in the year 29 B.C., he celebrated his triumph. The wars were over. The temple of Janus was closed.

By four great battles – Forum Gallorum, Philippi, Naulochus and Actium – he had risen from obscurity to power. Not one of them had he won himself. He had given the Roman world peace. It was not his own. He refounded its government to endure many hundreds of years. None of it was of his invention. His was that subtlest and rarest of talents – the ability to embody in practical measures the vague aspirations, the impatient wishes and the insistent hopes of other men. Mankind was enchanted with his gracious aspect. It did not realize that Augustus was a mirror in which it beheld its own features.

The world did not want a man of genius, nor an oriental monarch. Augustus, all his life, remained in the republican simplicity of his origins, doing his work in his comfortable old clothes in his 'den' at the top of the house – only keeping his company clothes for sudden emergencies and occasions of official pomp. Something of the tradition of Cincinnatus lingered about him. There was nothing highbrow about his table. He could joke well enough with worldly senators. He was neither so distinguished intellectually as Julius, nor so aristocratic in manners. But there was something in his eye more terrifying than the kindness of Julius.

He was Roman to the core. There lay his secret. He loved Rome, her aspect, her streets, her atmosphere; he enjoyed improving her buildings and dignifying her appearance. It was his pride that he found Rome of brick, and left her marble. The change was symbolic. Both the material and the mental changes of the Augustan age consisted in sheathing the crude truth beneath a veneer of polished beauty. A rough old Rome

had come down to Augustus. The wattle and plaster building of the days of Romulus had indeed long vanished with the forest clearances and stone building of the Etruscan kings: but the building of the aristocratic and oligarchic ages had been austere enough: public buildings apart, the domestic architecture of Rome had been mostly in soft stone that needed plaster and the paint-pot to redeem it. With the Gracchan transition (typically enough) had come in concrete, banded and faced with stone, like Sussex flint walls. The Cæsarean age had seen burnt brick introduced for the purpose of facing – a great improvement. The age of Augustus, under his inspiration, clothed these sober facts with marble – as may still be seen in St. Mark's, Venice, where the mediæval builders employed the same method of veneering walls with marble sheets. The underlying strength was there – but glorified and made acceptable to men. The purely practical side of building improved, when no demand was made that it should be decorative.

The greatness and majesty of Rome, her history, literature, tradition, methods, were dear to Augustus. He helped Titus Livius to compile his material, and encouraged him to write his history. A chord in his sympathies was touched by the ideal of pure fact clothed in perfect prose. From not altogether dissimilar motives he appreciated and protected the qualities of Vergil and Horace – so Roman the one in his philosophy, the other, in his practical wisdom. . . . Hence, the rule of Augustus became a revival of all that was typically Roman. He saw religion as Camillus had seen it – as a social discipline, an embodiment of an attitude to life. Explanation was a thing he scarcely asked or cared for. The social organism was the thing he appreciated. He was interested in the evolution and preservation of power: especially of Roman power.

X

He had spent years in reflection. Now, when the time came to act, he began little by little to build up a set of ideas, none of them particularly novel, and yet all of them full of significance for the future. He knew he had to consult the prejudices of half a dozen different kinds of men, and he

PLATE IV



JULIA
Daughter of Augustus

(From a Sardonyx Cameo in the British Museum)

deliberately set out to find the precise combination which would suit them all best. He recognized that his first duty lay towards the great popular party which had put him into power. He was never so foolish as to think that he could dispense with the support of the marching legionary, the working peasant, and the small commercial man. Far from moving away from them as his power increased, he drew nearer to them.

As we have seen, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus had based their projects upon the possession of the tribuneship of the plebs. They had been leaders of the people. The overwhelming fall of the Gracchi had turned their successors away from this policy. Marius had based himself firmly upon the consulship, and upon the army. Sulla had based himself upon the dictatorship. Pompeius had sought his authority in special commissions. Cæsar, like Sulla, had preferred the dictatorship, and had combined with it the simultaneous possession of the consulship and the tribunician power: he inherited the tradition of both Marius and the Gracchi, together with a keen perception of the meaning of Sulla's methods. But none of these various policies had been quite satisfactory. Augustus worried the tangle out by degrees.

He had begun with the triumvirate—which was a special commission of the type of those which Pompeius had held. After a year during which he had tried the experiment of dispensing with any regular commission or magistracy, he had tried the consulship for several years in succession, as Marius had done. But to do this was to trench upon the privileges and perquisites of the senatorial oligarchy. Even if he had had no other motive, his profound liking and respect for the tradition of Rome would have made him unwilling to offend the senate. He wished to gain his purposes with the smallest possible amount of change. For Julius to aspire to reconciliation with the senate would have been, of course, out of the question. But for Augustus it was a possibility. He laid the foundation by his use of his censorial power. One of the earliest steps in the Restoration of the Republic was his review of the senate. Strangers and outsiders of all sorts—freedmen and legionary soldiers even—had crowded into the venerable body. Augustus set to work. Some he induced to resign. Some, he firmly put out. Finally he reduced the senate, not perhaps to its old

numbers, but at any rate to manageable proportions. The families of the old oligarchy, while not enthusiastic over the new dispensation, warmly welcomed his policy. They realized how easily they might go further and fare worse. In return for this sympathetic attitude, the senate welcomed him as protector of the republic, 'Princeps,' the first citizen. It joined in conferring upon him the proconsular powers which gave the head of the Cæsarean party a formal status and legal authority. There was no question of any such authority being permanent or hereditary. Ten years was the period for which it was granted. It could be – and of course was – renewed. Like the special commissions of Pompeius, it was a military command over the armed forces of the state. The readiness of the old oligarchic families to support Augustus was rooted in their sense that he stood between them and forces far more destructive and leveling than himself.

They felt this all the more when, after five years of trial, Augustus abandoned altogether any claim to a regular consulship. As the senatorial oligarchy saw it, he restored to them their monopoly of the higher magistracies. As the people saw it, he was shifting his position from an aristocratic to a democratic basis. There might have been awkward complications if he had attempted to be merely a tribune of the plebs. He did better than that – he allowed himself to be invested with the tribunician power in the abstract. From this time forth he stood before the eyes of the Roman people as their representative, the Grand Tribune.

Hence, the Principate was not a glorified dictatorship – it was a glorified tribuneship. Augustus had returned to the original position of the Gracchi¹; but he returned, armed now with the military proconsulship of which Pompeius had taught the use, and supported by the army which Marius and Cæsar had organized.

¹ The stamp of this origin was never lost by the royal houses which derived from the Roman pattern. When Dr. Hodgkin (who knew his subject) could remark that it is a commonplace of mediæval history that the royal power was used to defend popular rights, we may remember that it sprang from an office designed for that express purpose.

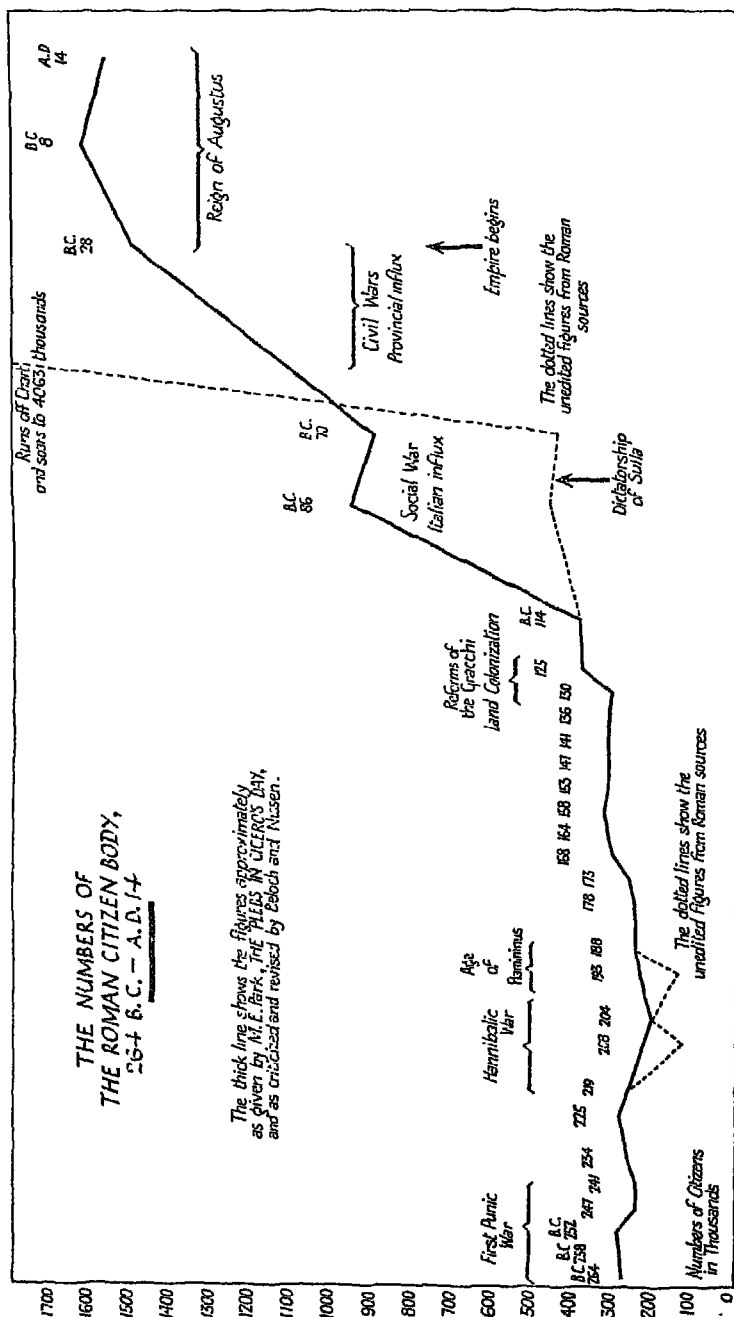
XI

This army was the new and revolutionary thing which altered all the conditions and circumstance of political life at Rome. Augustus himself was slow to realize some aspects of the case. Just as he had endeavoured to restore the senate to its old position in the state, so he was careful to strengthen and encourage the sovereign citizen-Assembly. But his success here was not so noticeable. A rapid process of change was transforming the Roman assemblies. The old *Comitia Curiata*, the Assembly of the Curies, had degenerated into nineteen lictors, and a magistrate in the chair. The electoral Assembly of the Centuries, with its anti-democratic property qualifications, was not wanted by any one. It was easier and cheaper to nominate the candidates and assume their election. A disreputable mob of poorer brethren, hopeful of loaves and fishes, still presented themselves at the legislative Ward Assembly, and listened to the speeches at public meetings. But for thirty years past the main body of electors had never appeared at the polling places. They had been too busily occupied, marching and fighting in Gaul, Armenia, Africa and Illyricum. Public opinion was formed in the military messes; propaganda passed round the cohorts, and was discussed in tents after dark. The real Roman electors, the real descendants – or at least, the real successors – of the men who fought at Zama and Beneventum – had evolved an entirely new political organization of their own. The most powerful general could not interfere with it. It could be as secret as the grave; and when it spoke, it spoke with startling authority, by deputations of bronzed centurions and crowds of veteran fighting men. Not once but many times during the civil wars, the army had directed its leaders to cease dissensions and work together. All the efforts of Octavian had been, not to destroy the armies of Antonius, but to convert them to his own views.

The new army then, had superseded the old Assembly as the political organization of the Roman people. In this there was nothing strange. The Assemblies always had been the reflection of the army. The Curiate assembly had been practically the old tribal army; the centuriate assembly had been derived from the hoplite army; the ward assembly, from

THE NUMBERS OF
THE ROMAN CITIZEN BODY,
264 B.C. - A.D. 14

The thick line shows the figures approximately as given by M. E. Park, THE PLEGS IN VICEROY'S DAY, and as criticized and revised by Lebach and Nilsen.



the army of the manipular organization. It was natural therefore, and in keeping with Roman tradition, that the new professional army, the cohort army, should have its political aspect. If this aspect differed from that of the old, there were good reasons. The new army did not come home every year, nor even after intervals of a few years, and find it easy, as once had been the case, to gather in the customary public places of Rome. It was a long-service army, the members of which spent many years on distant frontiers, and returned home, not to Rome, but to small estates that might be scattered anywhere between Cadiz and Ancyra: many of them had but a perfunctory acquaintance with their mother city: some had never even seen it. Their bond was of training and tradition – which can be a very strong bond indeed, but is different in nature from the bond of locality.

Another factor also had its effect. The last census had been in 70 B.C., the year in which Sulla's constitution was abolished. When, in the year 28, Augustus reformed the senate, he revised the list of voters. The old list had shown 900,000 Roman citizens. The new list, drawn up by Augustus, showed 1,500,000. How could all these record their votes at Rome?

Hence the efforts of Augustus to maintain the authority and importance of the Assemblies merely betrayed that the centre of power was shifting to the new body. He even entertained the idea of a representative system, in order to prevent the degeneration of the old institutions and to preserve a desirable civilian element: but no one really cared much for this plan. The new army was a reality, a genuine development of Roman institutions. Augustus finally took it as he found it, and adjusted himself to the facts.

XII

What was the meaning of such startling leaps as these of the senate to a strength of one thousand, and of the electorate to a strength of a million and a half, five times its old numbers? Only this – that Julius had cut the constricting bands which for long had restrained the growth of Roman institutions.

The intentions of Julius we do not know; but it is clear that Augustus regarded the increase with a certain thoughtfulness. Rome had owed her power to that nucleate organization which

grouped the softer associations of Italy around the hard core of Roman solidarity. He did not wish to see the nucleus dispersed. The Roman monopoly was indeed now broken; but Augustus restrained the process, with tact but with determination. A new line was drawn, and a new nucleus came into being, no longer exclusively Roman, but almost exclusively Italian. Augustus sought to stabilize the situation on this new basis. Hence his unwillingness to extend the number of citizens further, or to admit men from distant or uncivilized provinces, or freedmen. The time of revolution was over and done with. This was the time of reorganization, of renewed discipline and definite limitations.

So the Roman world gradually settled down again. Once more the fields were tilled, business began, and the tide of prosperity flowed. Men turned their backs with hope on the dark days of revolution, and faced with gratitude to the coming age.

XIII

Years passed, during which the very young person who had been Octavius matured, softened, mellowed, and became that wise and humane man whom future ages revered. He never wavered in his assurance that he had restored the republic. If, being restored, the republic would not work properly, he was there for the express purpose of adjusting it.

Round him, by a natural process, grew up that band of men, of all kinds, classes and accomplishments, known as the 'Friends of Cæsar' – the real governing council of the empire, whose united brains formed the power behind Augustus. Agrippa, who built and led the fleet which won Naulochus and Actium, was one of the great builders who transformed Rome into a new and golden city. The dome of the Pantheon – a solid shell of concrete – was made under his direction. He conducted also that great survey of the empire which formed an epoch in geographical learning. The name of Mæcenas, the civil minister and adviser of Augustus, the patron of Horace, has become proverbial for its suggestion of immense wealth devoted to the ideals of a refined intellectual culture. It was as if Marius and Sulla had been reborn to serve the new republic. Among these men, whose intellectual equipment was

as great as his own, Augustus began to reflect over the problem, which some day would need to be solved, how his power was to be transmitted to the next holder, and who that next holder ought to be. If it terminated with Augustus, the civil wars had been fought in vain. Even his legionaries took it for granted that the Augustan settlement was meant to be permanent.

Had Augustus possessed a son, the decision might have been simplified: but he had only a daughter, Julia, a brilliant and clever woman, a spoiled beauty, a 'bright young thing,' born to him from his marriage with Scribonia. His later love-match with Livia was childless. Livia was one of the strong and remarkable women of her day. She held Augustus with perfect success during their long life together, and outlived him by several years. In his interest she dominated Roman society almost as long as she lived, and rendered possible much that, without her, he could never have achieved. Though she had no children by Augustus, she brought with her two young sons of her former marriage: Tiberius Claudius Nero and Nero Claudius Drusus. Hence Augustus had one daughter and two stepsons.

It was not enough for Augustus to leave the question to the decision of events. Precisely this very impossibility of reaching a solution by agreement was the thing which had wrecked oligarchic Rome. The deadlock had been resolved by the choice of a protector, a Princeps, and no such deadlock must occur again. The first decision of Augustus was to make Marcellus, his sister's son, his heir. Marcellus accordingly was married to Julia but died a year later, leaving the problem still open. The choice of Marcellus may have been a ridiculous example of favouritism, or Augustus may have had better reasons than we know. In any case, he next chose Agrippa, married him to Julia, and invested him with the same legal authority that he himself possessed—so that, had Augustus died, Agrippa would have stood revealed as the holder of exactly the same combination of powers. Agrippa, however, died at the early age of fifty, leaving Julia with a young family, the grandchildren of Augustus.

From one point of view this was worse than nothing; since, although it provided heirs for Augustus, it left them the helpless victims of any strong man who aspired to power, if

the emperor died during their minority. Augustus was very anxious to provide for their safety in such an event. One way of doing so was obvious. The two sons of Livia by her former marriage were both of them very able men. Tiberius in particular – a typically proud, eccentric and clever Claudian – had had a successful official career, had been consul, and was of sound character. Here was a possible husband for Julia, and protector for her sons.

The marriage of Tiberius to Julia seemed at first to be an inspired solution of all the difficulties that beset Augustus. It appeared to be a happy one; Augustus did his own part with vigour. Tiberius was prepared for a future high position by being rapidly advanced in office and given ample experience. When the *imperium* of Augustus was renewed, Tiberius also received it for a period of five years. A little later the tribunician power was conferred upon him, and he became, though junior in authority, the equal of Augustus, and clearly marked out as his possible successor. It seemed as if the whole difficulty had been happily solved.

XIV

Without any warning, Tiberius at this point threw up all his employments and retired to Rhodes. Augustus at first would not hear of such a proceeding: he warmly expostulated, and even spoke in the senate of his unwillingness to lose the help of Tiberius. But Tiberius, for some reason only known to himself, was obstinate. Go he would; and with that dour, unflinching determination which he always showed when his mind was made up, he went. His mystified friends saw him off at Ostia, on his way to his island retreat; and Julia and her friends in Rome saluted his departure with a burst of embittered hilarity. When he paused at Naples on account of an illness of Augustus', the courtesy was promptly read as a hope that Augustus was dying, and bequeathing the empire to Tiberius. So Tiberius set sail again.

The retirement of Tiberius is one of those historical mysteries which continue to provoke the curiosity of mankind, but can never be positively cleared up. We are in ignorance of the domestic events which immediately preceded the crash. They were quite evidently serious; and quite evidently Augustus

was not completely aware of them. All we know is that Julia wrote a letter to her father complaining of the conduct of Tiberius; and it is no very great stretch of imagination to infer that Augustus, incredulous, perturbed, and inwardly assured that by skilful management and tactful persuasion he could reconcile his children, divulged the letter to Tiberius. The result, however, was far from being all that he had hoped. The violent breach which followed must have mystified Augustus then even more than it mystifies us now. Tiberius gave no explanations, and did not make any counter-accusations. All that Augustus could do was to allow things to take their course – not without some faint touch of gentle resentment, for he felt, quite correctly, that he was being left out of an affair in which, as a father, he had a proper interest. He devoted himself to the education of his grandsons, and to their induction into an official career.

Augustus, it is needless to say, had ample means of informing himself of the conduct of those in whom he took an interest. He was perfectly aware that Tiberius, at Rhodes, was living a quiet and decorous life of study, to which no objection could be taken. He was quite as well aware that stories were being circulated concerning the wild orgies and hideous immoralities in which Tiberius was supposed, or at any rate alleged, to be wallowing; but then this sort of story was common, and Augustus knew that stories of a milder type, adapted to the public credulity (which would not have swallowed anything too strong) were being circulated even about himself. The source of these stories about Tiberius was Julia and her circle. Occasional protests from the exile at Rhodes were received with amused deprecation by Augustus. It was no good worrying about these things. . . . And when was Tiberius coming home again? . . . And in this state the problem remained.

According to later versions, it was Livia herself who first opened her husband's eyes to the real facts. She was probably the only person who could safely have taken the risk of candour. A little severity on the Augustan brow – a little sternness in his voice – the mere reminder that he had power to find out what he needed – and the whole truth came out of the frightened domestics. The emperor recoiled with horror. Julia was the centre of a circle whose behaviour was notorious and

scandalous, and which carried on its nocturnal orgies even in the Forum itself. Not Tiberius but Julia was the criminal – and the deeper Augustus delved into the mire the more obvious it became that while the accusations against Tiberius were either untrue or unimportant, those against Julia were both serious and true. The man most deeply involved was Julius Antonius, the son of the triumvir. This alone was enough to make any one draw a long face. The others were men of the old senatorial oligarchy – a Gracchus, a Scipio, a Crispinus. . . . This is the outline of a scandal, the details of which seem to have been of the richest tyrian colour; for Augustus shut the door abruptly on it, and – as far as we are concerned – locked it for ever.

We only know that a number of arrests were made – including that of Julia herself. Not a trace remains of the interview which took place between father and daughter. It must have occurred; but all we can safely say is that from this time onward Augustus hated her name and could not endure to be reminded of her. She was removed in custody to the island of Pandateria; and as long as she lived she never again was free. Julius Antonius received a hint to remove himself; and he took it. Gracchus and the others were sent into exile at various places.

Fathers do not act in this way without very strong reasons; certainly not fathers of the affectionate, tolerant, easygoing disposition of Augustus. That he had loved, and even doted upon Julia, it is impossible to doubt. He did not turn round now for small or petty causes. While we cannot recover the exact details of what happened, it is possible to make some very probable inferences from what we do know. The whole episode – the behaviour of Tiberius and that of Augustus – would be completely explicable if we suppose that Tiberius had become aware that Julia was involved with a whole circle of men of an objectionable type, and if he had retired to Rhodes after a vain attempt to detach her had revealed to him that he was himself in danger from their influence. He had no evidence which he could lay before Augustus. In the four years which elapsed after his retirement to Rhodes, things had matured. Augustus obtained evidence which convinced him that Julia herself had enticed into compromising relations a circle of men who could not betray her without betraying themselves; and that she was the principal criminal is evident

from the nature of the treatment meted out to the various parties. Whether the conspiracy was aimed at the life and throne of Augustus we do not know; but we may be fairly sure that if it had been possible to pooh-pooh the evidence, dismiss the criminals with a smile, and smooth the whole case over – Augustus would have done so. After all, we need not expect to find him particularly enthusiastic over the treason and disgrace of his only daughter, of whose accomplishments he was with every reason proud.

Augustus communicated the main heads of the case to the senate. He sent a message; he was too perturbed in soul to make a personal appearance before the house . . . and the brief message so communicated is the only official statement ever made of Julia's downfall.

Three more years elapsed before Tiberius reappeared in Rome. He did not return until the death of Julia's elder son made it probable that he would once more be called upon to play a part in events. In Rome he remained quietly for two years. In A.D. 4 the death of Julia's remaining son left Tiberius the sole possible successor to Augustus. Destiny was being too strong for human will. In A.D. 6, at the age of forty-seven, Tiberius re-entered public life, and after an interval of eleven years returned to the career that once he seemed to have abandoned for ever.

XV

Augustus had eight more years to live. He experienced some of the strange and disconcerting results which are apt to result from living to a great age. He seemed to have strayed into a new era. Year by year Tiberius proved his worth, his ability and his usefulness. Though Augustus smiled at the dour strength and aristocratic pride of the Claudian, he appreciated his high qualities. In A.D. 13 Augustus renewed his government for the last time. With him, Tiberius also received the full *imperium* and tribunician authority. When, a year later, Augustus died at Nola, and a whole period of Roman history quietly ended, Tiberius stood by his side fully equipped to carry on the great office which Augustus had created. There was no need to look far for the new protector of the Republic. Here he was !

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CO-OPTED CÆSARS, THE SUCCESSION TO THE PRINCIPATE, AND THE LURID HISTORY OF THE TWO AGRIPPINAS

(A.D. 14 – A.D. 62)

I

Augustus had not been so foolish as to imagine that an elective dignity such as the Principate he had founded could escape those storms of party-strife which had already made the old institutions unworkable. He had never meant it to remain elective. He had hoped and intended that it should become a hereditary dignity, descending without strife or dispute from one hand to another. To this, his own failure of suitable heirs had been a serious obstacle. To devolve the empire – which was essentially a military dignity – upon the daughters of Julia was not to be thought of. Much against his desires he had been driven to co-opt Tiberius as his successor. But Augustus spent a little ingenuity in grafting the somewhat delicate shoot of the imperial family upon a more robust stem. He married his granddaughter Agrippina, the daughter of Julia, to Livia's grandson, young Germanicus, the son of Drusus. Agrippina seemed to have nothing of Julia's temperament. To all appearance she was a strong and robust woman, not given to flights of fancy. She settled down quite well as a Roman matron.

He perfectly understood what he was about in these measures. The conception was that after the empire had remained safely in the hands of Tiberius during the minority of Agrippina's children, it should after his death quietly descend to them, and so devolve again upon great-grandchildren of Augustus and Livia. In this way the serious difficulties which were so objectionable in co-optation would be avoided, or reduced to a minimum. And this programme was very nearly carried out.

We cannot doubt that it would have been carried out completely and in full but for three interlinked factors: the quite superfluous pride and impatience of Agrippina, the Claudian eccentricity of Tiberius and the persistent intrigue of the senatorial opposition. The accession of Tiberius irritated both the children of Julia and the old oligarchy, which latter awoke to find a new Princeps established amid circumstances which aroused its suspicions and reminded it of its traditions.

II

The principles and purposes of Augustus must have been well known to his family. His granddaughter Agrippina, at any rate, never seems to have doubted the nature of her claim to the imperial throne. It was a hereditary one, a 'legitimate' claim; and, as so often happened in later ages, the legitimacy of the claim seemed to her to render unnecessary any such further support as might be given to it by common sense or cogent argument. The tradition of hostility towards Tiberius of which Julia was the source made it still less likely that her daughter Agrippina would observe either tact or prudence towards him. Tiberius had accepted the conditions imposed upon him by Augustus, and observed them with loyalty. He adopted Germanicus as his heir; he placed him in charge of the legions on the Rhine frontier; he supported him in the attempt to conquer and subdue Germany, and when at last he withdrew his support, it was because he believed that the attempt involved vast expense without real hope of success. Yet he was soon convinced that the arrangement, entered into in good faith on his part, was not being observed with good faith on the part of Germanicus and Agrippina. Unable to wait for his death or his resignation—which latter might in some circumstances have been quite possible—Agrippina was organizing an opposition party designed to bring about his downfall. . . . Tiberius, a stern and officially-minded man, had no idea of allowing the principate to be overridden or agreements to be broken by violent young women or superficial young men. He held on tight to power; and the struggle which ensued had astonishing and dangerous consequences.

His claim to rule was perfectly valid. They had no right

FIFTH CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(AGE OF IMPERIAL PROSPERITY)

Comparative Scale	A.D.		
1760	←	14 Death of Augustus. Accession of TIBERIUS	The Claudio- Julian emperors, co-opted from a restricted hereditary circle
1770	←	19 Death of Germanicus	
Washington	←	27 Tiberius retires to Capri	
1780	←	30 31 Fall of Seianus	
		33 Death of Agrippa the elder. THE CRUCIFIXION	
1790	←	37 Death of Tiberius. Accession of GAUUS	
1790	←	41 Murder of Gaius. Accession of CLAUDIUS	
1790	←	43 Conquest of Britain. 48 Death of Messalina	
1800	←	49 Marriage of Claudius and Agrippina	
		54 Death of Claudius. Accession of NERO	
1810	←	59 Death of AGRIPPINA the younger	CIVIL WAR
		64 GREAT FIRE OF ROME	
1820	←	68 Death of Nero. Election of GALBA	
1820	←	69 OTHO VITELLIUS. VESPASIAN	
		79 Death of Vespasian. Accession of TITUS	
1830	←	81 Death of Titus. Accession of DOMITIAN	
		86 Revolt of Saturninus	
1840	←	90 92 War on DANUBE	
Peel	←	96 Murder of Domitian. Election of NERVA	
1850	←	98 Death of Nerva. Accession of TRAIAN	
		101 DACIAN WAR	Non- hereditary co-opted emperors, exhibiting the COMPROMISE between the Principate and the Senate
		106	
1860	←	113 PARTHIAN WAR	
Lincoln	←	116	
1870	←	117 Death of Traian. Accession of HADRIAN	
Bismarck	←	130 ERA OF CALM	
1880	←	138 Death of Hadrian. Accession of ANTONINUS [PIUS]	
1890	←	147 900th year of Rome	
1900	←	150 ERA OF CALM (continued)	
1910	←	161 Death of Antoninus Pius. Accession of [MARCUS AURELIUS]	
		165 PARTHIAN WAR	
1920	←	166-167 PLAGUE	Axis of Change
Mussolini	←	167 WAR ON DANUBE	
1930	←	175 { Revolt of AVIDIUS CASSIUS	
		180 DEATH OF MARCUS AURELIUS.	Accession of Commodus

to question it. But Agrippina was not content merely with the reversion of the empire. She could not wait, and could not endure to see the imperial dignity enjoyed by a man who (in her opinion) had not the same right as she had to its possession. This impatience she undoubtedly pushed past the boundaries of common sense and propriety. It became an obsession – a mania. When Germanicus, instead of the dangerous Rhine command, was given a pleasant Asiatic post, and died there, Agrippina had no hesitation in spreading the report that Tiberius had poisoned him. She had dragged her husband and children into strife which was totally unnecessary and uncalled for. But it was not her husband's interests with which she was most concerned. Though his rights to the succession lapsed with his death, her hereditary right remained in full force. She wished to marry again. Tiberius, unable to mistake the meaning of such a request, refused his permission.

III

To get Tiberius into proper perspective we have to go back to the earliest years of Rome, and to notice the nature of the tradition concerning the Claudian house. With unanimity the Claudians are depicted as men of exceptional individuality, strong character, crabbed and often trying temper, and of originality in their political views. This character and crabbedness Tiberius showed to perfection. He was a strong man, of some intellectual distinction, and with a streak of the dour and slightly perverse humour which stamps some Scotsmen. These characteristics made him an exceedingly dangerous man to play tricks with; and in their relations – which grew less and less friendly – Agrippina played him a very large number of highly irritating tricks which would have infuriated a much more commonplace type of man than Tiberius.

The historian Suetonius has drawn a vivid pen-picture of him – his robust frame, rapid stride and downbent head: his habit of becoming absorbed in his own private thoughts: his curious intricacy of mind. The element of 'Scottishness' increased in him as he grew older. He combined practical benevolence with uncompromising candour. He was capable of anything except politeness. Nothing is better attested than his generosity,

except his disagreeableness.¹ All his life he was a serious man, without any taste for the lighter side of things; a hard worker, a strict purist in language (capable of apologizing to the senate for introducing a Greek word like 'monopoly' into a Latin document), interested mainly in what we should nowadays call mathematics and archæology. The secret of his character was that he was a typical Claudian, and a thorough aristocrat.

Such was the man against whom Agrippina waged her feud.

IV

The third factor was in the existence of the old senatorial oligarchy which, although it had long been quiescent as a political force, had never really accepted the verdict of Philippi, but maintained still its belief that it represented the republic. Among the members of this social class – still powerful, though no longer supreme – Agrippina found alliances which made her dangerous.

It was easy to awake their hopes and their ambitions. The proscriptions which had thinned their ranks and swept away their leaders were beginning to fade a little from memory. The literary tradition was on their side. They jumped at the chance presented by a rift in the unity of the Cæsarians. Whether they would have proved in the end very faithful or very profitable allies to Agrippina is highly questionable, for nothing was more abhorrent to their thoughts than the idea of a hereditary magistracy, even though they might recognize the validity of a hereditary *qualification* for magistracy – a very different thing. Again, there were men like Asinius Pollio, a Cæsarean and yet an Antonian, who had always held aside from the court of Augustus. Among these also there were men ready to take advantage of Agrippina's discontent. The harm she did lay in that she made herself the centre of all these forces, and gave them a common interest which otherwise they would not have possessed.

¹ Kenneth Scott, 'The Diritas of Tiberius': *American Journal of Philology*, LIII, 2 (1932), p. 139. If we attributed many or most of the troubles of Tiberius to his disagreeable tongue, we should only be following the footsteps of Plutarch, who with good reason made (or repeated) the same remark about Cicero.

From the time of the death of Germanicus, therefore, began a new period in the reign of Tiberius, during which he was engaged in a ceaseless blind struggle with an unrest of an unaccountable nature among the senatorial order. While the Roman dominion continued with slight exceptions to enjoy a general peace and (on the whole) such good government as it never before had known, the Princeps himself was ringed round by an active enmity which it took much of his time to grapple with. After three or four years of it Tiberius took a step of a kind which Augustus had always been very careful to avoid – he built a permanent fortified headquarters at Rome for the cohorts of the Prætorian guard, and stationed near at hand a force of men on whom he could rely. The event was historic, for it was the first hint of any serious rift in the harmony of the Augustan settlement, and it brought into prominence the person and the importance of an hitherto unknown man – the Prætorian Prefect, the Commander of the Guard.

Seianus, the first of the famous Prætorian prefects, made an immediate mark in Roman society. His social ability and personal charm established an influence which was very useful to Tiberius. The emperor, after the death of his only son, Drusus, which happened at this time, grew less and less inclined for general society. At last he left Rome altogether, and took up his permanent residence on the rocky island of Capri, off the Sorrentine peninsula. There he spent the rest of his life and reign.

In a Latin country such a seclusion as this would in any case inevitably give rise to a certain amount of gossip and scandal: but the retirement of Tiberius to Capri gave rise to much more than was either natural or normal. The emperor's tastes and inclinations were, if anything, a little simpler and more ascetic than was common among wealthy men in his age; yet stories, never definitely substantiated or backed by anything like proof, concerning the alleged orgies of Capri were soon circulating in Rome and have remained permanently recorded in history. Seianus found himself busily engaged in the task of running to earth a series of conspiracies or questionable cases which led him, step by step, to Agrippina as the source of the trouble. Agrippina was at last arrested, tried *in camera*, and

condemned.¹ Tiberius was not moved by the sentimental aspect of the case. That she was the daughter of Julia and the granddaughter of Augustus made her case in his eyes worse.

The fall of Agrippina shocked Rome. Tiberius had for a moment shown the iron hand which lay beneath the velvet glove of the principate. But Rome was still more startled when the fall of Seianus almost at once followed. Although unseen and remote in Capri, Tiberius was as watchful as ever, and he had found reason to suspect the good faith of Seianus. With dramatic and terrifying suddenness the Prætorian prefect was arrested, condemned and executed. He was swept out of the path of Tiberius with a ruthlessness which the Romans long remembered.

V

The case against Seianus, complicated in its details, was simple in essence. He was the first example of a danger which was to reappear in the future – he had used his official position to pave his own way to the principate. He was charged with having himself caused the death of Tiberius' son Drusus, and of having involved in Agrippina's fall various other members of her family whom he wished to clear from his path. The investigation into the case was prolonged and severe.

The personal aspect of the tragic drama which clouded the last years of Tiberius has always aroused the interest of those who read the story; but there was another side to the case which the stern old man himself recognized. In his struggle with Agrippina the imperial family had been severely damaged, and the hopes and projects which Augustus may have entertained concerning the succession had been largely destroyed. Tiberius did not reverse his policy respecting Agrippina and those of her sons who had been judged and condemned, but he set himself to secure the succession. Agrippina's son Gaius ('Caligula') and Tiberius' own grandson Tiberius Gemellus were made joint heirs. It was the best that could be done.

¹ Among the other persons arrested was Asinius Gallus, the son of Asinius Pollio. He was condemned, apparently for conspiracy, but was not executed; he died still a prisoner. It has been suggested by Professor R. S. Rogers, 'The Conspiracy of Agrippina' in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, LXII (1931), p. 155, that Asinius Gallus was the projected second husband of Agrippina; and if so, he was probably the principal leader of the senatorial revolt.

Both of them were far too young to be adequately trained. Neither of them was an Octavius, born to the art of statesmanship. An inevitable gulf was now destined to interrupt the tradition of the principate. When, in his seventy-eighth year, Tiberius died, he could not bequeath his power to a successor moulded in the pattern of himself and Augustus. He knew that those who followed him would be of a different tradition, and temper. He was one of the very last of the old Roman patricians, the pure-blooded stock which had founded Rome. He was almost the very last great Roman to hold the stern old aristocratic and republican virtues as a direct tradition from antiquity. He had hated shams; he had detested servility; he had rejected empty titles, golden statues and religious worship. He had liked individuality, common-sense and hard work. In his faults and his virtues he had been the complete Claudian.

VI

Four years after her own death, therefore, Agrippina's son Gaius Caligula stepped into the vast shoes of Tiberius, and the world at last, after long postponement, enjoyed the privilege of being ruled by a descendant of Julia. The slight and physically delicate young man of twenty-one was received with an outburst of enthusiasm. With the army, which revered the name of Cæsar, he was popular. The senate welcomed him as the representative of a family which had fought against and suffered from the stern Tiberius. It looked on with indulgence when Gaius swept aside his young colleague and assumed the whole heritage of the Cæsars. The early days of his reign were a time of general reconciliation and hopefulness.

The senate was a little too previous in jumping to conclusions. Its members had not yet appreciated a certain 'drift' that was altering the relative position of the historic parties. Just as the senate was more and more coming to believe that it itself, alone, represented the Roman republican tradition, so the policy of young Gaius revealed that the views current in the imperial family concerning the nature of its dignity had changed since Augustus founded it.

Immediately after his accession, Gaius proceeded to do what, in modern times, would be done by a newspaper campaign, or

similar means of publicity – he brought before the attention of the public the high dignity of the imperial line of which he was the third representative. The means proposed was an issue of coins bearing the heads of his deified predecessors. One type bearing the head of Augustus, still survives: but as originally planned there was another coin, bearing the head of the deified Tiberius. The steady refusal of the senate to deify Tiberius destroyed this plan. Gaius had no power to compel the senate against its wishes. He had the coin struck afresh with a new inscription, but the head of Tiberius on the coin is sufficient proof of the person whom it was proposed to commemorate.¹ In other words, Gaius was prepared to do full honour to Tiberius, and by no means shared in any prejudice against his policy.

By degrees the ridiculous truth emerged. The senate had hated the policy and condemned the memory of a man who had possessed most of the republican virtues, and who had taken a conservative view of the principate; and it had welcomed in his place a young man full of extreme oriental and Hellenistic views of the sacred monarch and of the divinity of his person. Marcus Antonius² had exercised more influence than was realized at the time upon the evolution of imperial ideas; and the family of Agrippina and Germanicus were descended from him through his daughter Antonia. Herod Agrippa had formed the young man's mind: and the result was a series of ideas which startled Roman senators almost as much as they would startle modern men. Gaius shocked them by regarding himself as above the law, by demanding religious worship of his person, and by believing himself to be superior to the ordinary level of human nature. He claimed to be the Latian Jupiter. These ideas were part of a perfectly intelligible and systematic political philosophy which had had a long history in the past, and was destined to have a long history in years to come; but when presented to Roman opinion through the medium of Agrippina's son, they seemed like lunacy, and they gave rise to rumours and legends of the most upsetting kind. Many of the stories told of Caligula were of a

¹ Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, 1. Introduction, cxliv.

² And possibly the great Julius too.

more or less symbolic nature. But the reality behind them was serious enough. Was that baby-faced youth a wild humorist or a genuine madman? No one knew. Gaius had soon estranged the senate and alienated the army. The hostility of the senate was perhaps regrettable; but the hostility of the army was fatal. When, instead of a few fat senators, a group of hard-trained military tribunes put their heads together, the end of Gaius came. He was waylaid in corridors of the palace and murdered by the swords which once had won Pharsalus and Philippi.

This was eight years after the death of Agrippina.

VII

For the army itself to have murdered a Cæsar was a startling portent; a storm-signal which gave warning to those who looked on.

While the blood of Gaius still lay upon the pavement of the Palatine, and the indefinite unconfirmed rumour was still flying through Rome, a private soldier, prospecting in the imperial apartments for souvenirs, saw on the floor below the curtain of an alcove a pair of shoes. Cautiously moving aside the curtain, he found that the shoes contained the late emperor's elderly uncle Claudius, who, under a pardonable misapprehension of the circumstances, promptly fell upon his knees and prayed for mercy. It is improbable that the soldier had at any time entertained ill-will towards Claudius, and now, as he stood holding Claudius by the arm, he perceived that here was a souvenir indeed! Was not the old gentleman the sole surviving male heir of the empire? Claudius, still praying for mercy, was pushed firmly through the corridors of the palace, until he was pushed into the open air, and finally into a circle of armed men. He only ceased praying for mercy and dried his tears when it became evident, even to himself, that he was being loudly saluted as imperator by the military persons about him. That night he spent in the warm security of the Prætorian camp. A few hours before, Claudius had been a despised old uncle, humbly writing his histories and reading his books in retired corners of the palace, persecuted by the hilarious Gaius Caligula and pitied by the servants. Now he was the heir of Julius and master of the Cæsarean legions.

The murderers of Gaius had taken refuge with the senate, and the senate, debating the crisis, was of opinion that the protectorship of the republic had lapsed and become extinct. Gaius had appointed no heir, nor did any one survive who held the imperial powers. Some of the senators were in favour of abolishing the principate altogether; others preferred the alternative of a new line of emperors, chosen in the first instance by senatorial election. They were aroused from their fancies by finding that the decision did not rest with them. The Prætorian guard – considering itself a quorum of the army – had already elected the next emperor, and now presented him to receive the legal rights and powers which the senate had been accustomed to bestow upon Augustus and his successors.

The fine words and pompous theories of the senators hastily collapsed. The usual powers were voted to Claudius. The new emperor announced the share-out of a substantial money-bonus to the gratified troops, and a general amnesty to the relieved senators. The only exceptions were the actual murderers of Gaius – who took their revenge by replying that they did not care, since they had not intended to replace a lunatic by an imbecile. The senators, somewhat aghast, realized that in a few hours, without a blow struck in wrath, that change had been accomplished which, after the death of Julius, had taken thirteen years of civil war. By so much had the power of the Cæsareans increased, and the power of the oligarchy waned. Not even the severity of Tiberius had so brought home to them the truth that they were losing the peace as they had lost the war.

But, just as a sea-change had come over the Assembly, when it ceased to embody the opinion of the mass of Roman citizens, so the senate too had altered. The ancient senate had owed its power to the fact that it was composed of the heads of families, semi-tribal chiefs wielding august powers over their kinsmen and followers. The imperial senate was merely a gathering of rich individuals who exercised authority over their own households and dependants and no farther. There was a vast difference between a primitive *familia* with its numerous members of full blood, and its clients and slaves, who all dined together in the same kitchen and were served out of the same cauldron, and on the other hand the small Augustan family with

its freedmen and slaves, none of them attached to their master and colleagues by much more than a cash nexus. The old senator of the early republic had been a representative, whose views reflected the opinions of a large common table. The senator of the early empire was only an individual – if that.

This was the change – hardly realized by those whom it affected – to which the senate owed its mysterious impotence.

VIII

By all classes of the empire – save perhaps a few embittered oligarchs – Claudius was accepted with the good humour which so often in life is extended to the Born Fool. He became, and he remained, a sort of legend – a standing joke, a proverbial 'Massa Johnson,' on whom all the floating pleasantries of conversation could be fathered. Romans delighted to relate some of the judgments which Claudius was supposed to have delivered from the bench or the wise sayings with which he was alleged to have seasoned some recent speech. The modern reader, conning over these Joe Millerisms, can see that in most cases they covered a good deal of solid good sense, and that the main charge against Claudius, as against Tiberius, was merely one of Peculiar Behaviour.¹ At last the Romans acquired the habit of laughing at Claudius before he opened his mouth. They were too busy laughing at him to conspire against him. Without noticing such things, he plodded earnestly upon his way.

He was by no means such a fool as he seemed. Though Augustus had doubted him, and Tiberius had ignored him, and though Gaius had played cheerful practical jokes on the elderly relative, and his mother had communicated with him through the medium of servants – still, Claudius, like some other ugly ducklings, was of the genuine breed. He was after all a Claudian, and the blood of Marcus Antonius ran in his veins. It was soon apparent that he could control the machinery of government to far better effect than Gaius Caligula. Even where his own doubtful and trembling fingers faltered, he had the gift of choosing his men with an unerring judgment.

¹ Ruth, *The Problem of Claudius* (1916), suggests the simple explanation of all the peculiarities and apparent contradictions of Claudius that he was a seven-months' child

His secretaries, the freedmen Pallas and Narcissus, Callistus and Polybius, were among the ablest official administrators who ever ruled the empire. Their keen eyes and swift minds did the detail work of which Claudius was incapable. The old uncle might go to bed and slumber heavily while those lean and hungry Greeks worked on at figures and schedules into the small hours; and he wisely never enquired whether they drank his best wine and embezzled ten per cent. of his revenue while doing it. They did; but Rome could afford the dishonesty of Pallas and Narcissus better than the theorizing of Caligula.

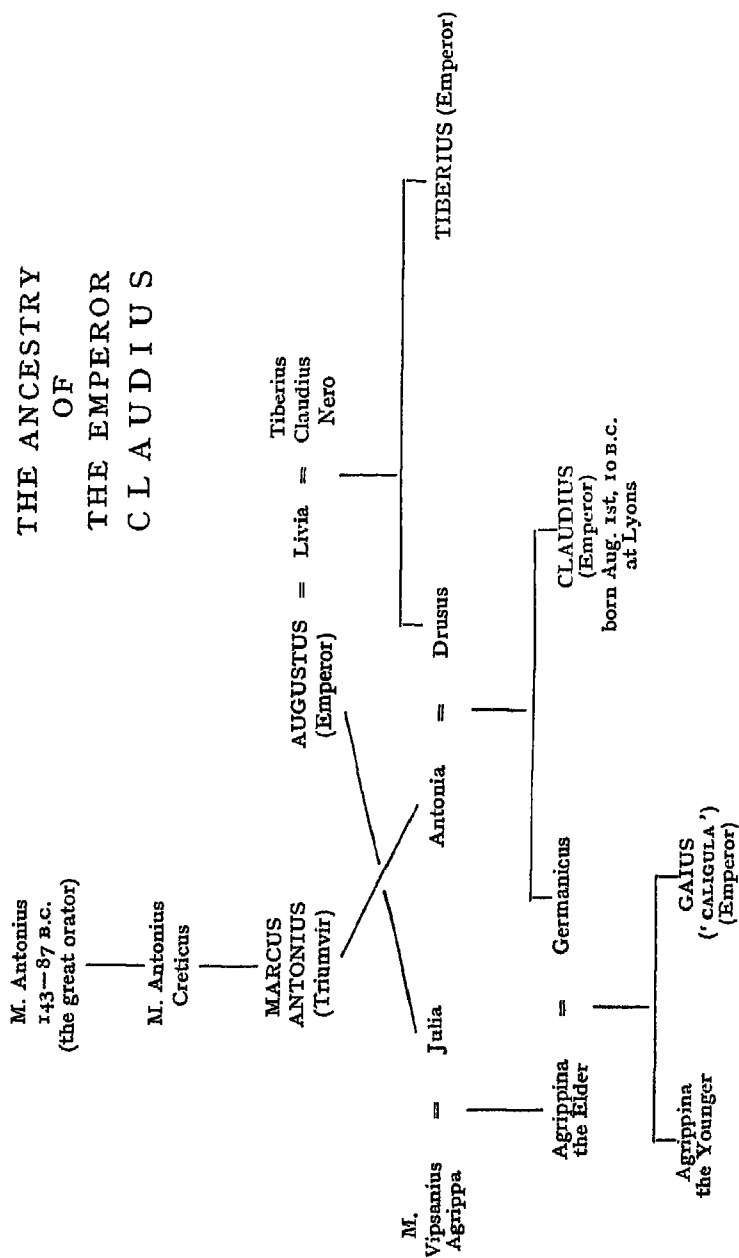
Claudius, as we have seen, had been proclaimed by the Prætorians as the sole surviving male heir to the empire. Another heir also survived—a woman. No sooner did the general amnesty set free the political prisoners, than Agrippina the younger, the sister of Gaius, whom from motives of prudence he had carefully put under restraint, entered upon the scene to continue the part played by her mother.

IX

Our acquaintance with Agrippina the Younger can best be begun with one of those portraits which, whatsoever their exact degree of authenticity, rank among the most striking works of art which any civilization has ever produced. The head of Agrippina is a study well worth making.

The most remarkable characteristic of Agrippina can hardly be called beauty. She was no Greuzian darling. Had she lived to be seventy, she might have been a sufficiently sinister old dowager. Something of the strength of Vipsanius Agrippa lingers in her. But the dominating note is exactly that element which meets us in the portraits of Augustus. The curious, often graceful, sometimes fascinating petulance of the young Octavian is related to something in his character: namely, the passion for success which determined his whole life. Fortunately for his repute, no insuperable barrier blocked his way. Though he waded to what was practically a throne through treachery, murder and war, the world decided to forget these things. In the middle of his life he settled down contentedly to a calm and blameless old age—and not even the blood of Marcus Tullius Cicero ever cried out against him. But the madness which would have devoured him, had he failed, was

THE ANCESTRY OF THE EMPEROR CLAUDIUS



nevertheless there. He avoided its blight, but he passed it on to his descendants. Julia was destroyed by some ambition insatiable and uncontrollable. The story of Agrippina the Elder we have seen. She perished in a conflict as hopeless as it was unnecessary. Now came Agrippina the Younger. If we study her portrait carefully we shall see in it the elusive features of Augustus—the suggestion of a beautifully proportioned character that has difficulty in coming to its maturity, and may be destroyed in the effort to do so.

There can be no doubt concerning the natural gifts of Agrippina. Not many women have started life better equipped with strength and ability. Tiberius had not visited upon her the faults of her mother. An oriental sultan—not without logic—would have wiped out the whole brood. Tiberius, instead, did one of those unexpected things which were characteristic of him. He selected Gnæus Domitius Ahenobarbus as her husband and married her off to him.

Now Tiberius was a man by no means ignorant of human nature. Least of all men could he have been unaware of the repute of Gnæus Domitius. The latter cynically confessed it himself, when his son was born: 'Anything that springs from Agrippina and me must be a plague to the community and a curse to the earth,' he said.

The child was the future emperor Nero.

To this action of Tiberius, therefore, we must attribute the conception and birth of that human being whom the early Christians seriously believed to be Antichrist, and who has come down to us as the Beast of Revelation. At this time, when the old uncle was beginning his prosperous but clumsy reign, the future emperor was a child. Gnæus Domitius the elder died in the year A.D. 40, and Agrippina was free to begin a course of action as daring as it was successful. She intended to marry Claudius.

To achieve this end it was first of all necessary to get rid of the existing wife of Claudius—Valeria Messalina. Difficult as this might be—for Messalina was clever and highly-connected, and Claudius was sincerely attached to his wife—Agrippina set about achieving her object.

X

Messalina ! — the name is a proverb: but it was not a proverb when Agrippina began her campaign. The least learned person knows its implications: but it had no implications then. Messalina was a gay and cheerful person who kept Claudius perfectly happy. That she was absolutely faithful to him it is quite unnecessary to suppose. It would not have been at all in keeping with the manners of the day; and Messalina was aristocratic in descent and temper, and fashionable by instinct. She had her adventures and recreations; but one thing is fairly certain: none of them hurt or offended Claudius, or interfered with his satisfaction in life. By the standards of her day and class she was an excellent wife to her husband. She had done what no empress hitherto had succeeded in doing; she had produced a son, an heir to the principate, Tiberius Claudius Germanicus — the first son ever born to an empress. This was hardly a sign that she was a more than usually wicked woman. Neither was she an especially unsophisticated person. She was acutely on the watch; and she promptly got rid of Julia, Agrippina's sister, who had shown too great an interest in Claudius. So strong was her position that only a very remarkable foe could shake it.

It was when she awoke the suspicions of the secretaries that she laid herself open to successful attack. The execution of Polybius through her influence startled and shook his colleagues. They knew her and she knew them, and hitherto they had held their tongues about one another. Their doubts and fears, once aroused, were not easily put to sleep again. Here was the opening required.

Claudius was superstitious, and was much upset when on the eve of a journey to Ostia the secretaries produced a prophet who had predicted grave disasters to the husband of Messalina. When it was suggested that the omen should be averted by Messalina going through the marriage ceremony with someone else, the idea was welcomed on all hands. Even Messalina seems to have been taken with it. Gaius Silius, a wealthy Roman of high rank, was put in as 'bridegroom' to receive on his devoted head the predicted disasters, and the 'marriage' was celebrated with enthusiasm. Claudius left for Ostia with a

satisfactory feeling that the omen had been successfully neutralized.

But at Ostia the hint was conveyed to him that perhaps the wedding had been a little too realistic. Much perturbed, he sent for Narcissus, who admitted that he too thought so. In fact, so realistic had it been that to all intents Claudius had been divorced from the empress, and Gaius Silius occupied his place. . . . The emperor was quickly stampeded. He was convinced that he had been betrayed. They urged him to hurry back to Rome and take refuge in the Prætorian camp before anything worse happened; and Claudius was soon driving as fast as he could on the return journey, anxiously enquiring whether he were still emperor. Narcissus accompanied him in the carriage to take care that no one spoiled this perfect condition of panic. In the meantime the 'bridal' party had been keeping up the celebrations with hilarious festivity and with a realism which left nothing to be desired. In the midst of it a messenger burst in to bring word of what had happened at Ostia. They saw at once that they had been trapped. Silius rushed off, while Messalina hurried to meet her husband. But it was a matter of life or death now for the secretaries, and Narcissus was present to make sure that Claudius should absolutely refuse to speak to the criminal. The emperor went on to the Prætorian camp, and caused Silius to be arrested and brought before him.

The story afterwards told to explain what had happened is probably identical with the charge which was brought against Silius at this trial. It was submitted that he was Messalina's lover; that he had urged her to murder Claudius and marry him; that he had offered to adopt her son and reign as guardian of the young emperor; and that this supposedly mock marriage with Messalina was part of a conspiracy and was intended to have full and real effect. . . . What truth, if any, there was in this astounding tale, and by whose evidence it was proved, we do not know. More than one reason can be imagined why Silius offered no defence. He was at once condemned in company with his alleged accomplices, and executed.

It was generally recognized at the time that if only Messalina could speak to Claudius personally, the whole case against her would collapse. The struggle now was to prevent them from

meeting. When Claudius at length consented to see her, Narcissus took the strong step of preventing it by issuing on his own responsibility the death-warrant for her execution. Claudius heard that she was dead; and he did what so often he had done in similar matters in which his secretaries were concerned – he said nothing, made no enquiry, and the whole matter dropped. He probably never doubted the truth of the story told him.

XI

Narcissus had been the actual agent who had engineered the downfall of Messalina; Pallas was the diplomatist who paved the way for the new empress, but Agrippina was the influence which proceeded to bury full fathom deep the reputation of her predecessor. When she had finished, the buxom empress had been transformed into the monster of immorality which she remains to this day. Certain irrepressible lineaments of strong character and stern honesty stood up above even the flood of falsehood with which Julia and the elder Agrippina had overwhelmed Tiberius; but Messalina was softer stuff. To this day she has never emerged from the calumny; but fixed in it like some fly in amber, remains proverbial and legendary even to those who have never heard her story.

XII

As soon as Messalina was comfortably out of the way, Agrippina married the flattered and bewildered Claudius. The watchful secretaries lent their gracious countenances and their persuasive tongue, and Claudius – notwithstanding fits and starts of occasional doubt and wonder – was satisfied. The secretaries were safe with Agrippina. They were her associates in crime; and it was a mutual guarantee-bond stronger than gold.

The marriage of Agrippina was only the first step. The second was to secure the adoption of young Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus as a 'son' of Claudius. Messalina's son was now eight years old, and since the invasion and conquest of Britain in the year 43 he had borne the proud title of *Britannicus*: but Claudius did not hold out long against the persuasions of Agrippina. Lucius Domitius was adopted under the name of

Nero Claudius Cæsar Drusus Germanicus, and henceforth he was known as 'Nero.' Agrippina had brought him up well. The young Nero had physical beauty and real accomplishment. In music and singing his taste and achievements reached a high level. His speaking, both public and private, was admirable, and threw into the shade the efforts of Britannicus. Claudius could not deny the remarkable virtues of his adopted son. He could only gaze and marvel.

The simplest reader will feel that if Life Insurance had existed in ancient times, the premium required for Britannicus would at this point have exhibited a continuous upward trend; and he would be quite right. Even his father, who was unusually gradual in his mental processes, had gleams of the truth. Claudius began to realize that Nero had taken precedence of Britannicus – that honours had been heaped upon Nero, which Britannicus did not share. Nero had been married to Octavia, the emperor's daughter. Nero had been invested with the proconsular authority, one of the chief powers of the principate, so that if any mishap befel the emperor, Nero and not Britannicus would stand forth as his indicated successor. Narcissus began to take up the cause of Britannicus; and Narcissus was a man who had the gift of carrying conviction to the mind of Claudius. It became known that the emperor had talked to his son in a way hinting at private projects of his own in favour of Britannicus. If Agrippina's schemes were to be realized, the early demise of either Britannicus or Claudius was an urgent necessity. The Roman historian, at any rate, has no doubt what happened. Claudius was poisoned by the agents of Agrippina.

All her preparations were made. The palace doors were locked, and for some hours there was neither entrance nor egress. Suddenly the doors were thrown open, and Nero appeared, accompanied by the Prætorian prefect, Burrus. Any doubt or hesitation vanished in the presence of Burrus. The Prætorians acclaimed Nero. Over-awed by the action of the Prætorians, the senate, on the same day, invested Nero with the legal authority which it was in its power to bestow. Those who remembered Britannicus, and would have stood up for his claims, were completely over-ridden.

PLATE V



TIBERIUS Caesar
Augustus



Tiberius CLAVDIVS
Caesar *Augustus*



AGRIPPINA
the Younger



NERO Claudius Caesar
Augustus Imperator

(From Coins in the British Museum)

XIII

The victory of Agrippina was now complete. She had succeeded where her mother had failed: she had penetrated right into the inmost sanctuary of political power, and had vindicated those hereditary claims which she derived from Augustus.

At the very moment of her success, her own position began to totter. The empire was a man's dignity, and the disappearance of Claudius fatally weakened her real power. She could transmit the claim to her son, but she could not enjoy power herself. To her, with her craving for command and supremacy, this was a tragic failure. She had that crazy extreme of maternal feeling which cannot be happy without complete dominance over all that is around it. But what could she do? By the side of her son now stood the figures of his minister, Seneca, and his prefect, Burrus. Over young Nero she might have ruled; but she could not influence two strong and experienced men of mature age. If she could have destroyed them – and they were well able to defend themselves – it would only mean that others started up in their place. The defect – it was a defect from her point of view – was inherent in the circumstances. She was a woman! If only she had been a man!

Had either of the Agrippinas been a man there might have been two – or three – Augustuses instead of one. They had the force of character; they had the depth of intelligence; the only thing they lacked was the right sex. Agrippina the Younger would have left no such name behind her as her son Nero was destined to leave. The dismissal of Pallas took away her chief instrument of power. Sullenly, but with dignity, she retired from the stage. Even from the background of quiet social intercourse her personality radiated, and her presence could be felt. She could not be prevented from exerting the influence which is always exercised by strong character. A short time afterwards, Britannicus died as his father had died, and Nero had no longer any need to fear a possible rival.

The government of Seneca and Burrus was on the whole a good government. Under their administration the wheels of the machine designed by Augustus turned smoothly and

efficiently; a large revenue was collected without oppression from a healthy and flourishing empire, and a well-arranged judicial system protected the citizen in his daily work. If the empire had its defects, it was nevertheless an immense advance upon any government previously known to Europe. If it had its injustices, it had fewer by far than the old system it displaced. The reign of Nero was, therefore, as far as administration goes, a period of reasonable happiness and prosperity for mankind. Nearly its whole interest lies in the struggle that was waged within the restricted circle at the top – the struggle for control.

Nero's importance lay in that he was the man who nominated Seneca and Burrus to their posts. At any moment he could dismiss and replace them, if he thought good. Nero did not himself do the work of government. His personal character therefore did not directly affect the world at large. With Seneca at his desk at daybreak, it mattered little how long Nero lay abed. With Burrus going the round at midnight, it made no difference when Nero retired to rest. But the moral character of the emperor did, in the long run, affect the world at large. Slowly, inexorably, like the pull of the tide or the power of gravitation, the moral element determined the course of events.

There can seldom have been a human being who was more carefully and deliberately trained on the wrong lines than the young Nero. His claim to be Antichrist has real substance when we consider the nature of the teaching that formed him. He was by natural disposition sensuous. His perceptions were focused sharply and perpetually upon modes of sensation. The moral principles taught him – they still survive in the pages of Seneca – acted on him like some modern prophylactic inoculation. The dilute solution of moral principle which the Stoic Seneca taught, permanently protected Nero from the possibility of understanding right and wrong.

The only thing that could have corrected this was a thorough discipline in the spiritual, the conceptual, the abstract – the idea of principle. And yet, though the life of Jesus of Nazareth was recent, and Paul and Peter and John still walked and talked with God, this was the one thing he never was taught. He did not even know the methods of Cæsar and of Hannibal. The only form of spiritual value known to him was the dramatic.

The dramatic and the beautiful composed his world. He knew of no other morality, and no other logic than theirs.

XIV

Nero's pleasure in beauty quite naturally brought him into relationship with the most beautiful and accomplished woman of her day – Sabina Poppæa. She was not only beautiful, but interesting. Her story is not unparalleled in our own days. A perfect physical presence and an unusual intelligence made her the most admired woman in Roman society. Young Nero wanted to add her to his circle. Not being personally acquainted with her, he sent his friend M. Salvius Otho to explore the ground on his behalf. Otho went. In such ways is history made!

Otho is too substantial a person to be called a butterfly. He was a high-bred falcon who flew only at first-rate quarry: a handsome and accomplished man, an able soldier, perfect in manners, charming in conversation. He came, he saw – and he was conquered. He reported that Poppæa was much overrated, and he married her himself.

A little time passed before Nero realized that he had been fooled. When he swept Poppæa into his own net – a victim willing, if the fowler were good enough – he presented Otho with the commission of a governorship in Lusitania – far away on the Atlantic sea-board: and Otho, realizing the situation, went. But he fully meant to come back.

Nero's fascination with Poppæa was not unreasonable. She, if any one, was his counterpart, his complement, his 'soul mate.' To her he responded as a needle to the pole. She was the supreme and dazzling example of what can be made of the human female by letting loose, for several generations, the whole force of strong will and delicate intelligence upon the pursuit of pleasure. Given the limits and the specification, Poppæa was a marvellous product of human civilization. Nero yearned towards her as he yearned to the perfect work of art, the triumph of the genius of man. Not merely the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, but the gratification of a perfect taste, the delight of a trained judgment – these were the pleasures that Poppæa could give. Nero appreciated them. The eye that appraised the Greek vase,

and the ear that scanned the Greek verse – deeply and fully did they realize the perfection of Poppæa. O! that so wonderful a thing should be!

The cost of very precious works of art is high among the thrills they give. The million-priced thing has a luxury all its own; and Poppæa's price was high. She shared her world with no other woman – not even with Agrippina. Nero was charmed! Agrippina? Yes! The thought had just that necessity, that inevitability, which belongs to high art. This was the million price. Well – she should see how Nero paid!

He set about the task with the same business-like acumen with which he might have searched through his strong-room for treasure. How could he remove Agrippina? The removal needed to be civilized, decorous and artistic: there must be no vulgarity, no scandal. Agrippina would not be an easy person to hoodwink. At this point an ingenious suggestion was made. There was one thing that no one would anticipate beforehand or believe afterwards – a collapsible ship.

The Perfect Murder – a really artistic arrangement in crime – worked admirably up to a certain point. It must have given a supreme thrill to the imperial experimenter. But the machinery went wrong, and Agrippina, instead of being drowned, swam ashore. There was trouble in Nero's household next day when the truth was known. The mind which had planned the coup realized that unless the failure could be retrieved, its own lease of life was short. When Agrippina saw the faces of the swordsmen who waited upon her she told them with passion that they had no mandate from Nero to kill his mother. They did not tell her whence the real mandate had come. She was slain as Caligula had been slain. . . . Unpleasant – but she had set so many bad examples.

Death, treachery and ruthlessness had marked Agrippina's steps. Here was her reward. She was trapped and destroyed by the very son for whom she had committed her crimes. She was not spared this knowledge. Perhaps she deserved to have it.

In the meantime, the price had been paid. Nero had not emptied his vaults or stripped his treasury; he had not thrown a ring into the sea, or drunk a pearl in vinegar. He had done something far more distinguished: he had become a matricide,

just as though he were the hero of a Greek tragedy. He was awe-struck at his own dreadful eminence.

XV

A certain link still held Nero to the world of the orthodox and the conventional—his wife Octavia, the daughter of Claudius. As long as he preserved that link he preserved his touch with the forces that once had made and still upheld the Cæsars. But if he should sacrifice Octavia he would become an adventurer whose career had been a story of astonishing and inexcusable intrigue. He would finally kick away the ladder by which he had ascended.

For long he hesitated. Even after Agrippina's death he felt that Seneca and Burrus represented a public opinion which he ought not to defy. Three years passed before the dissolution of this barrier. Then Burrus died; and the disappearance of the great minister set Nero free.

The death of Burrus marks a dividing line in Nero's life. The man who filled Burrus' shoes was the most detestable of all the Prætorian prefects—Sophonius Tigellinus. Shrewd, unscrupulous, sensual, skilful, cruel and malign, Tigellinus made what was good, evil; and what was evil he gladly made worse. No more destructive influence was ever exercised over any man than that of Tigellinus over Nero. Satan himself had arrived to inspire the doings of Antichrist. The retirement of Seneca soon followed. Without Burrus, Seneca could not hold his ground. The exact mood in which he resigned is uncertain. In such circumstances ministers do not invariably wear their hearts upon their sleeves, and it would be imprudent to lay too much stress upon the smiles and courtesies with which Seneca bowed himself out of office.

As soon as Burrus and Seneca were out of the way, Nero proceeded to get rid of Octavia. It may be a debatable point in the science of moral pathology whether matricide is more or less serious than the calumny of a guiltless wife; but this need not detain us here. As all attempts to inveigle Octavia artistically into the toils were a failure, Nero was obliged once more to resort to vulgar means, and to shove her out. Then the long desired goal at last was reached! He was free to marry Poppæa. . . . Their union was a real and sincere one. The

perfectly matched pair were joined in one of the most remarkable triumphs of matrimony which this simple world has seen.

If Sophonius Tigellinus were indeed Satan, he must have laughed to see the curve with which Nero now proceeded to fall from that peak of success. Nero had climbed hazardously to the very summit; he fell with such a blaze as the world never forgot. Its reflection still casts a dazzling light in the Book of the Revelation of St. John, where the angels poured out the vials of the judgment of God upon the earth and man.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FLAVIANS, AND THE PROBLEMS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND THE SUCCESSION

(A.D. 62 – A.D. 81)

I

The marriage of Nero to Poppæa was the signal for the unloosing of the ill luck which hitherto had been held in leash. On the 19th of July in the year 64, the great fire of Rome began. It was a historic catastrophe. Sweeping like a Judgment Day through the heart of the ancient city, it did not cease until a great part of Rome had been laid in ashes. Almost at once a legend was on foot – a legend at once so deadly in its effect and so probable in its nature that it must contain some core of truth. It was the famous legend of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning.

It was said – and the story rings true to character – that Nero, gazing upon the vast holocaust, accompanied on the lyre his recital of Priam's lament over blazing Ilium. If this be a lie, it is a very clever lie, invented by some one who knew uncommonly well what Nero was likely to do. The quotation would be so apt – the occasion so pat. . . . So far, the legend may well be true. But embittered owners, who had lost their all in the fire, went further. They said that Nero himself had caused the fire in order to have the pat occasion for the apt quotation. It is possible that he did so; possible, but not probable. The story marks the moment when Nero, the ordinary human being, fades from our sight, and is replaced by a glorified figure of imaginative romance, greater, stronger, more consistent and more courageous than the real man ever was. He had posed as a dramatic figure and he had been taken at his word.

The fact that the charge was made and believed in – the very existence of this legendary and glorified version of Nero's

personality—shows that public opinion had divined a truth about Nero: it had perceived that he was governed by a merely dramatic or artistic motivation: so that in place of the canons of right and wrong which rule—however imperfectly—the actions of the common man, he had substituted the test of artistic effect, an æsthetic rather than a moral criterion. The average Roman was far from being a fanatic in either the theory or the practice of morality, but this curious problem awoke his interest. He was sure that such a scheme of values was monstrous and evil, and that the man who entertained it was an abnormal man, capable of any crime. From the moment this attitude spread, Nero's position began to be shaken. He had excited one of the basic prejudices of mankind.

II

The charge that he had set fire to Rome was sufficiently serious to require immediate rebutting; and here again a strange and sinister element entered into the case. Certain persons existed at Rome who used strange language about an approaching end of all things in general conflagration.¹ Tacitus has mentioned them by name—the Christians: and it is evident that the government either suspected that these prophecies were veiled threats intended to be helped to fulfilment by the prophets, or else thought that by a little twisting of the evidence it would be possible to persuade public opinion that the Christians, not Nero, had plotted to burn Rome. Many arrests followed, and the prisons were soon crowded with members of the new religion.

It was a curious fortune that brought into contact things so diverse as the government of Nero and the Christian faith, and a grim irony that he should have been quite unconscious of the most supremely dramatic episode of his reign. There was no difficulty in dealing with the alleged criminals. Most of them were poor; nearly all were unimportant: their association was unlicensed; any missing evidence could easily be supplied; and it would be difficult to imagine any section of

¹ This can easily be verified from the second epistle of Peter, chapter iii. St. Peter was in Rome at this time. Nero's hostility to the Christians may be connected with his hatred of Pallas, who was the brother of Felix (Acts xxiii, 23, 33, and xxiv) and probably the protector of the Christians in Rome.

society less able to hit back. There was no danger in giving reign to a little imagination in dealing with them. The fantastic horrors of the First Persecution have often been told. By all human reckoning it should have wiped out the new sect and rendered its votaries a name to be whispered with fear. But its actual results were startlingly different. The murmurs against Nero were not silenced; public opinion was not convinced; the public stared at the agonies of the persecution and pitied the sufferers. And when all was over, the public attention was still fixed uncomfortably upon Nero.

Before he had time to settle down after these events, another deadly pitfall was revealed before his feet. The conspiracy of Piso was all the more dangerous because it was never perfectly cleared up. The suicide of the principal witness – probably with the connivance of Nero's servants – made a complete investigation for ever impossible. Worst of all was the fact that Seneca himself was involved in the conspiracy.

Was Seneca guilty? It is hard to avoid the suspicion that he was, and that he, and not the wretched Piso, was the real master-mind behind the organization. He was allowed to take his own life. But the episode shook Nero's nerve. Up to this point he had depended upon the unquestionable loyalty of his servants and subjects. The whole aspect of things was altered by the revelation of enmity and conspiracy directed against him even by his closest and most intimate friends. The very foundation of his rule was in danger.

Not only so: not merely his rule, but his personal happiness, his private prosperity was threatened. The strange Nemesis which was pursuing him penetrated past all his defences and struck at his very heart. Three years after he had married her, and soon after the catastrophe of the great Fire and the conspiracy of Piso, Poppæa died – and with her died her unborn child.

Nero was not prepared for this series of reverses. He had been counting upon life going forward as it had always gone – upon fortune playing perpetually into his hands. He had not really believed that fortune is fickle, and that the man who trusts to her is a fool

III

The truth about Poppæa's death was not generally known at the time, and it is quite impossible to recover it now. Stories were afterwards whispered that Nero himself was the agent by which the catastrophe was wrought – that he himself kicked her and that she died in consequence with the unborn child who was the last direct heir of Julius and Augustus; but no one now knows the truth. We only know that the lovely Poppæa did die, and that Nero was left alone, plunged into a kind of stupor from which Tigellinus strove to arouse him.

If Tigellinus really had been Satan, he might have given just the counsel that he gave. He persuaded Nero to leave Rome, and to seek forgetfulness in Hellas, where art was still valued and the artist appreciated. The emperor was yet a young man. Many years of life and rule might lie before him. But even granting these possibilities, Nero's visit to Greece sacrificed the very future it was meant to save. He might yet have maintained his ground had he been present in the midst of the activities of Rome, fully informed of all that was happening. Tigellinus took him to Greece and forgetfulness. While he played with his favourite recreations he was neglecting the one thing that mattered – the succession to the empire. That problem, which had baffled Augustus, and had pursued its devious and uncertain way ever since his death, now bulked vast and thunderous on the horizon of the future. The storm was rising. One single life now stood between Rome and a new struggle for empire – and that life was Nero's.

Nero spent about a year in Greece – a year which completed the strange and mysterious process of disintegration which was destroying his power. He celebrated the Olympic games and was graciously pleased to appear as a competitor. Towards the end of a year of unrealities and fantasies he was urgently recalled to Rome by the temporary secretary to whom he had committed the custody of affairs. Reality was tapping at his gates. He could not at first credit the facts. Ever since he had fallen under the spell of Poppæa he had been living in a world of imagination in which events had no causes and deeds no consequences. He was to be undeceived. He was especially to be undeceived about consequences.

The news that began to arrive was startling. Julius Vindex, the governor of Gallia Lugudunensis, had raised the banner of revolt. Among the allies he had sought for was Servius Sulpicius Galba, the governor of Hispania Tarraconensis. Galba, though of ancient lineage and high reputation, was a muddler of no great ability; but a far more dangerous person than Galba had control of Galba's ear. The man who influenced Galba's earlier actions, dictated his plans, controlled his opinions and wielded his power was a skilful and accomplished diplomatist, a man thoroughly at home in all the processes of Roman intrigue—a brave soldier, a capable general, a competent statesman.

He was Poppæa's husband—Otho.

IV

The revolt of Vindex and the adhesion fifteen days later of Galba and the army of Spain produced a situation which needed the careful and prolonged study of all the political experts of the Roman world. There were many of them—keen and far-sighted men who could reckon far ahead and calculate the chances with unerring accuracy. With one accord they began to desert Nero. Exactly whither the complex tides of power would set was not yet visible; but very visibly they were setting away from him.

A kind of paralysis held him. While he sat and debated and asked himself what he ought to do and schemed horrid revenges and world-conquering exploits, and felt that the sky was falling upon his head—the unjust stewards of his household hastened to make friends with the coming powers. Tigellinus faded gradually into the background. The struggle developed with Nero hardly much more than a looker on. Galba had placed his services at the disposal of the senate, which, though at the moment it made no move, noted his attitude with satisfaction. Virginius Rufus, the governor of the Rhine provinces, was the next to enter the field. He was not enthusiastic on behalf of Nero, but he and his men expressly disliked Vindex and his Gallic army. In a fierce battle fought at Besançon, Vindex was overthrown and the Rhineland legions remained masters of the situation. Old Galba shook in his shoes at the news of the fall of Vindex; but there was nothing

to fear. Virginius Rufus was a peculiar man. Although implored, persuaded and even threatened by his legions he flatly refused to accept the empire. For the moment the Rhineland legions could be left out of the reckoning. Hence the fall of Vindex did not mean the safety of Nero, nor imply any danger to Galba. Stronger, crueller and subtler men took up the running. Otho sent his gold plate to Galba, to go into the melting pot to finance a campaign, and himself arrived to assist in the direction. Otho was in touch with the influential officers of the Prætorian guard. He had already undertaken to guide the prefecture into the hands of Nymphidius Sabinus; and it was Nymphidius Sabinus who dropped those hints concerning the immense bonus to be expected from Galba, which had so great an effect upon the rank and file of the Prætorians. The latter were not altogether well disposed to Nero, and mention of the bonus turned their good-will definitely to Galba. Hence there was no question now of Galba flinching from the contest. His supporters would force him up to the scratch.

Nero may or may not have fiddled when Rome was burning; he certainly took no adequate steps to stay the destruction of his power now. While he wasted the precious moments in a kind of hypnotized lethargy, the secret arrangements were made. Galba waited in feverish anxiety, and Otho, perhaps, in anxiety only a little less feverish, while day followed day and still they received no word of decisive events in Rome. Two months passed before the freedman Icelus arrived at Galba's Spanish headquarters with the news that transformed the situation. He had travelled from Rome as fast as men could travel in the days before telegraphs and motor cars. In seven days he had crossed the Tyrrhenian sea, landed at Tarraco, and ridden up-country, and here he was with the sure and certain news that Nero was dead. With his own eyes he had seen the body and he could testify !

The story of Nero's death as Suetonius narrates it is one of the most striking episodes in ancient history. The miserable Antichrist had not given up hope until it became quite clear that the Prætorians were no longer with him. He had tried to sound them as to whether they would follow him if he took temporary refuge in the East. By their answers it became clear

that they would not. He slept on the rebuff; but at midnight awoke and found that the palace was deserted. It was not the legendary Nero, resplendent with superhuman wickedness, who fled in disguise and took refuge in a cellar, but an unhappy and cowardly human being in a state of fright. His servants urged him to save himself from the coming peril. He ordered a grave to be dug and wept over his dolorous case. 'What an artist is perishing!' he said, in that famous phrase which shows how he clung to his delusions. When the news came that the senate, informed of his flight, had declared him a public enemy, he tearfully enquired concerning the penalty. The answer horrified him. It was (they told him) the old traditional method of being tied to a fork and beaten to death with rods. Very bad panic followed, vividly described. When at last he heard horsemen upon the road, and correctly guessed the sound to mean the advent of the messengers of the senate, he screwed his courage up to the point of stabbing himself in the throat. The wound would not have been mortal had not his secretary, Epaphroditus, helped his hand. Entering the room, the centurion found him dying. 'Too late!' said Nero. 'This is fidelity!' These were his last words before he died.

He had asked that his face should not be mutilated and his wish was observed. Icelus must have left Rome at once on his journey to Spain; so he could not have repeated at that time the touching details with which Suetonius concludes his life of Nero. The body was buried by the emperor's old nurses Ecloge and Alexandria, and his mistress Acte, in the family tomb of the Domitii. For long his grave was decorated with spring and summer flowers – probably by the same hands.

And this was the end of Nero. Galba's path had been miraculously cleared. Although Vindex had been struck down, Virginius Rufus had refused the empire and Nero was dead. The way was open.

V

Galba arrived at Narbonne to meet the representatives of the senate. The conference was strange and historic. Here, at length, the senate faced an emperor who was free from the fatal taint of Cæsarism. Galba, for his part, made with admirable correctness and perfect good faith the gestures demanded

by the situation. 'Liberty' was his watchword. The house of the Cæsars had fallen. Freedom had returned. Otho stood well back from these celebrations. They had no interest for him. When he marched forward into Italy it was with thoughts of his own and with a policy other than Galba's.

The seven-months' reign of Galba was as much a dream of unreality as Nero's had been. Nero had drugged himself with ideas of art: Galba drugged himself with ideas, no less illusory, of ideal political virtue. Like all the men of the decadent oligarchy, he was cursed with an incapacity for understanding common humanity. An incoherent notion still lingered in his mind that the man at the bottom, the common man, would march and fight and die and throw himself away gratuitously, because it was his duty, if only he were commanded to do so in a sufficiently lofty tone. He had received an imperfect tradition which taught him what ought to be expected from the servant, but omitted what should be looked for in the master. It was his unhappy destiny to become an awful example of this fault. Together with all his friends, he had to learn that the old days were over. Payment was now expected in advance, and in cash.

The mischief began with his very arrival outside Rome. A large concourse awaited him, among which was a considerable body of the marine infantry who had been enrolled by Nero, but not properly organized nor provided with quarters. These met the new emperor in a somewhat disorderly manner, insisting upon a satisfactory answer to their demands. Some of them brandished their swords. Galba ordered them to be dispersed. They were not dangerous; they did not stand for a moment before the charge of Galba's mounted escort. Many were killed; and the entry of the new emperor was accompanied by bloodshed and disorder. The revulsion in public opinion was immediate. Galba was never forgiven for the blood shed that day. Hardly any other single action he committed was quite so fatal to him as this.

How entirely the strength of any Roman government depended upon public opinion is demonstrated by the history of Galba's short reign. The man in the street was instinctively hostile, and an undercurrent of popular criticism sapped, from the first, the foundations of Galba's position. The

spectators at the circus and the audience at the theatre made ironic enquiries respecting Tigellinus. Where was Tigellinus? And where was Tigellinus' huge fortune? At the same time a subtle propaganda was at work from a different quarter. Before Galba arrived in Rome, certain very peculiar transactions had taken place. Nymphidius Sabinus, the Prætorian prefect, by the offer of a huge bonus, had induced the guardsmen to declare for Galba. The mind which laid the plans was perfectly well aware that Galba would not redeem the promise. It can hardly have been that of Nymphidius himself, for he subsequently tried to persuade the guardsmen to elect him emperor – and found that the bonus promised on Galba's behalf was a fatal barrier in the way. He was killed; and the indignant troops and the guardsmen continued to expect the bonus promised. When, after Galba's arrival, it became clear that he would not pay anything remotely like the amount promised them, the feeling among the Prætorians underwent a remarkable change. They felt that they were being deceived. The promise, in fact, so operated as to make it certain that Galba would reach Rome as emperor, but would not last long when he got there.

As Tacitus says, once Galba was unpopular, everything he did, right or wrong, made him more unpopular. Before he left Gaul, he had thought it wise to recall Virginius Rufus from the Upper Rhine command; and that wonderful man obeyed without demur. In the meantime, to the vacant command of the Lower Rhine army Aulus Vitellius had been appointed – a choice which needed much more explanation than it ever received. Vitellius had acquired a reputation for honesty in his former official career; a reputation which seemed to be confirmed by the undoubted fact of his present poverty. Galba assumed perhaps too hastily that the poverty was voluntary, and inferred from it without sufficient reason a moral virtue akin to his own. Vitellius pawned his mother's jewellery and left his wife and family in cheap lodgings in order to raise the money to get to the lower Rhine. The men who were secretly inspiring the public opinion of the Rhineland armies – Fabius Valens and Aulus Cæcina Alienus – recognized in the new commander the tool they wanted. When, on New Year's Day, the Rhineland

armies crowded the prætoriums to take the annual oath to the emperor, a test of opinion was possible. The army of Lower Germany took the oath to Galba so grudgingly and so imperfectly as to make clear its real sentiments. The army of Upper Germany took an oath, not to Galba at all, but to 'the senate and People of Rome.' It took two days to negotiate a common basis of agreement. As Vitellius himself reminded his men, they had now either to fight the army of the Upper Rhine or else make a new emperor. They chose the latter course and on the third of January Vitellius himself was with enthusiasm elected. He was a mere figure-head for the more powerful personalities of Valens and Cæcina.

VI

The revolt of the Rhineland armies was so popular among the rank and file and the support for it so complete that events moved rapidly. 'To Rome!' was the universal cry: and Vitellius adopted the slogan 'Concord.'¹ The phrase was no idealistic aspiration but an appeal to the armies of the empire to unite in one common policy.

The news of the revolt reached Rome seven days later. For the present it was kept secret among the inner circle of Galba's friends. Galba himself realized his own incapacity for meeting unassisted so perilous a situation. He was seventy-three years old. A more vigorous man than he was called for by the emergency. His choice was characteristic. He selected, not Otho, but L. Calpurnius Piso, a young man, without experience, still untested and untried, who possessed the qualifications of belonging to the innermost ring of the senatorial oligarchy, and of repeating its shibboleths with the correct Catonic pomp. Of what value these were likely to be in the field, against the Rhineland legions, was not obvious.

Otho, by no means unreasonably, had believed that the choice would fall upon his own shoulders. As soon as he knew the truth he realized that Galba was living in a political fairy-land and that strong steps were necessary. His agents were notified. Five days later—a fortnight after the proclamation

¹ For these propagandist coins and slogans, see Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, I, ccxx – ccxxiii; and Mattingly and Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, I, 196, 218.

of Vitellius – Galba and Piso were murdered by the Prætorians and Otho was acclaimed in their stead.

The death of Galba and the accession of Otho meant a movement to the left – to the imperial and the military side. There was no senatorial enthusiasm on behalf of Otho; the sullen, time-serving acceptance which he obtained was all that he could expect – but it was all that he needed. The reality of military power was in his hands. 'Liberty' as a slogan was heard of no more. 'Security' was the motto which Otho adopted as the keynote of his programme. He proposed to carry on the tradition of the earlier Cæsars – the policy of Italian dominance which had been that of Augustus – and he proposed to begin by defending Italy from the new invasion of the barbarians which threatened it. Luxurious and sensual he doubtless was; but he was a highly civilized man and he knew enough to realize what the presence of the Rhineland armies would mean to Italy.

But he was hampered by the collapse of the fabric of government. The fall of Galba dragged down a further section of the tottering bulwark of authority. Nero's fall had overthrown the hitherto impregnable might of the Cæsarean house. Galba's fatally breached the remaining prestige of the senate. It had aspired and asserted its claim, only to be trampled under foot in the strife which now raged above it. The impotence of the senate during the struggle which took place for the empire was a lasting lesson to those who beheld it.

The government of the Cæsars had been carried on through the organization of the Cæsarean household. This household was not yet utterly dispersed, but it was crumbling. The pressing need was to reorganize it and renovate it, and to turn it into a permanent institution which should not be subject to mere chance and the accident of events. In this work there had been no hope of help from Galba and there was none from Vitellius and the Rhineland legions, who would probably destroy even where they meant to fulfil. In Otho alone lay the hope of a civilized and Italian government for the dominion of Rome.

His first business was to organize for Italy an army of defence capable of meeting the Rhineland legions. He had no time to lose. Cæcina was already on the march across the Alps by the short route over the Great St. Bernard pass. Fabius Valens,

with a second army, was making a detour by Vienne in the Rhone valley, whence his road would lead up the valley of the Drome to the Mount Cenis pass, and to Turin. The two armies would meet at Placentia on the Padus.¹ The necessity for Otho was to hold Placentia and Hostilia – at which latter place he would get into touch with the Illyrian legions, who had been urgently summoned and were on the way. Whether they would arrive in time to be useful was a matter of doubt. They were slow in starting; the commanders did not perfectly grasp the situation; and in any case the distance was great. Otho therefore concentrated his main attention upon the problem of creating an Italian army. He had the finest soldiers in the empire, the Prætorian Guards; but a good many of the rest of his troops were only partly trained, and he had to draft the best of his marine cohorts into his land army. Hence, when he sent a fleet to operate on the coasts of Gaul and delay the march of Valens, the fleet, manned with an inferior type of officer and men, did badly, and failed to produce any serious effect. For this additional reason Otho was compelled to organize his defensive line on the Padus at once, without waiting for more than weak contingents of the Illyrian legions. Cæcina's swift arrival showed that Otho's promptitude was wise. Placentia beat off the invaders, who wheeled eastward upon Cremona instead. Of Valens there was, as yet, no sign.

VII

Cæcina, moving eastward along the great road to Mantua, was met by the full force of the Italian army. A fierce battle was fought at a place called Locus Castorum, and Cæcina retreated upon Cremona. Here at last he was joined by Fabius Valens, and the combined armies began to build a bridge across the Padus. Otho was outnumbered, and his own advisers thought that he had most to gain by a policy of delay. He decided, however, that attack was the safest defence. His plan was to make a rapid flank march to the rear of the Vitellian army and cut off its retreat westward, while the approaching reinforcements of the Illyrian army were collected together to block the road eastward and Otho himself took up a position to bar any

¹ For details, see Dr. Henderson's *Civil War and Rebellion in the Roman Empire* (1908); Tacitus, *Histories*, Books I to III.

possible break-away southward across the new bridge. The Rhinelanders would then be completely encircled and their position would probably involve a disastrous retreat, if not surrender.

The weak part of the plan was that it required greater training in the troops and greater skill in the officers than either of them possessed. The encircling column stayed too long on the road before beginning its flank march – and it was caught there by Valens and Cæcina. Then followed the fierce and prolonged contest which is sometimes called the Battle of Betriacum, or the Battle of Cremona. Otho's generals fled in the middle of the struggle; his troops were cut to pieces. The losses were tremendous. When the field was partially cleared after the battle, one of the heaps of dead was house-high. The survivors were granted terms next morning, and surrendered. Victors and vanquished of the rank and file fraternized without difficulty. They had fought with fury and determination; they now proceeded to weep upon one another's necks.

Otho heard the news and made up his mind that it was his duty to die. The soldiers with him begged him to hold out, and pledged their faith and resolution. He was, however, quite clear on the point at issue. He refused to be the cause of further bloodshed. The tale of his death is in remarkable contrast with that of Nero. Having destroyed all incriminating correspondence that might damage others, and having given away all the money he possessed, he bade farewell to the members of his entourage who could be persuaded to depart. He comforted and encouraged his nephew, Salvius Cocceianus. He spent a quiet night and slept well. In the morning, having seen that his personal attendant was sent well out of the way, so that he might not be involved in any responsibility for his master's action, Otho quietly fell upon his dagger and died.

He was very nearly thirty-seven years old, and though not a great man in the usual sense – not a man of transcendent intellect or character – he was a gallant officer and a great gentleman; and his followers certainly thought so too, if the action of the men who voluntarily slew themselves at his pyre is any proof of affection or admiration.

VIII

If Otho's suicide had been dictated by a profound design to damage his rival, it could not have been more effective. Three days later the news was known in Rome, and the full powers of the principate were voted to Vitellius by the senate. But now it gradually became clear that the whole position of Vitellius was imaginary and unreal. It lacked objectivity. Vitellius was not a man of brains or character; he had no thoughts, no plans; he was more interested in eating than in anything else. His reign is famous chiefly because he spent more money on his table than any other known human being: nine hundred million sesterces, so Tacitus tells us. But he had merely been forced into the principate by the Rhineland legions, and since his position was not justifiable by ability, and his right was not proved by results, he at once began to lose ground. . . . It is after all no use putting a man in the driver's seat unless he can drive. And this fact that the principate was not a reward but a function was – at least to some people – a startling political discovery, which effectively disposed of persons of the type of Valens and Cæcina. The Rhineland armies were clearly proving themselves to be a public nuisance which urgently required suppression.

Even before Vitellius had arrived in Rome, the currents and tides of power had changed. The imperial posting service had whirled the news of the battle of Cremona over the hundreds of miles that divided Italy from Judæa. There the mail-bags were opened by a man of a type far removed from Galba, Otho or Vitellius – the legate Titus Flavius Vespasianus.

Vespasian was neither a political idealist nor a fashionable person. Still less was he an ambitious gourmand. He was a short, thickset, bald-headed man of the type which Italians of a later age caricatured in Punchinello. He looked like a retired hotel-keeper; and he had indeed a good deal of the cool horse-sense, the prosaic realism and the business acumen which a hotel-keeper needs most to cultivate. He had accepted Galba and recognized Otho; but the portly Vitellius was too much for him. After despatching a formal acknowledgement of the new princeps, he consulted his friends and advisers. They were unanimous. None of them would for a moment tolerate the idea that a man like Vitellius should be forced

PLATE VI



*Imperator Servius GALBA
Cæsar Augustus*



*Imperator M OTTO
Cæsar Augustus*



*Aulus VITELLIUS
Germanicus
Imperator Augustus*



*Imperator Cæsar
VESPASIAN
Augustus*

(From Coins in the British Museum)

upon them by a Rhineland army. There would have been strong support for the candidature of C. Licinius Mucianus, the legatus of Syria, who was educated, aristocratic and imposing. Mucianus, however, declined the inconvenient honour, and proposed Vespasian, who after all had certain advantages of physical robustness and mental resilience, and had, moreover, two sons to carry on the empire after his own death. Vespasian himself was never enthusiastic, least of all over his own virtues; but the general opinion was that they might as well cut their throats, all of them, as come to any other conclusion.

At last, after a little hesitation, the critical step was taken at Alexandria by the prefect, Tiberius Julius Alexander; and two days later, as Vespasian emerged from his tent, he was unexpectedly acclaimed by his own troops. It is likely enough that he sat up longer than usual that night, chuckling quietly to himself over the idea of being an emperor. A fortnight later, under the guidance of Mucianus, Syria had sworn the oath of allegiance to Vespasian. The vassal princes of Asia Minor gave in their adherence, and the word spread into Illyria and even beyond.

While the Vitellians were wasting their time, their money and their health in Rome, their destruction was being organized by men whose methods were truly Roman. It was arranged that Mucianus should take charge of the military side of affairs while Vespasian went to Egypt to organize the financial aspect, and to seize the corn-supply on which Rome depended. The vast revenues of the eastern provinces were in his hands, and the shipping of the eastern ports. His preparations were on a huge scale. He made ready for a mighty war.

But his greatest asset was himself. A mordant genius for judgment of men — the gift in which Otho had failed — had surrounded him with a circle of helpers whose good sense and sobriety matched his own. He had had his troubles. He had survived the reign of Gaius Caligula, when, complaints being made that the streets were insufficiently clean during his ædileship, he had been directed by the emperor to stand at attention while some of the superfluous mud was thrown at him with shovels by a fatigue party detached for the purpose.

He had committed the crime – the enormity of which needs no stressing – of going to sleep during a musical performance conferred upon a grateful world by Nero himself: and he had been expelled with contumely from the court. Though he had failed in these matters there had, fortunately, been a war, in which he succeeded in making a better show. The revolt of Judæa had put him in charge of operations against the Jewish rebels. His type of character made an instant appeal to the Roman armies. Something square, solid and steadfast in him gave him power over the Roman mind. It was not even necessary now for him to do all he planned to do. The mere programme was enough. Before Mucianus, with his expeditionary force, had got past the Bosphorus, the Illyrian army, stirred by the mere name and fame of Vespasian, had acted.

IX

The Illyrian leaders met at Poetovio; an open air conference which the troops off duty attended as an interested audience. A party of three – M. Antonius Primus, L. Cornelius Fuscus and Arrius Varus – advocated a vigorous lead, and an immediate advance into Italy. This proposal was immensely popular with the audience, which had no hesitation in the vocal expression of its candid opinions. The Illyrian army was hungry to be at the throats of the Rhinelanders. Orders from Vespasian, directing them to await the arrival of Mucianus, were ignored. A month had not passed since the proclamation of Vespasian at Alexandria when Antonius Primus took the road for Italy with a small force of light infantry and cavalry. Travelling fast from Poetovio, he seized Aquileia at the head of the Adriatic, and then, following the great high road by Concordia and Altinum, he reached Padua, where he heard that the crossing of the Adige was open to a surprise attack. At dawn he rushed the bridge-head at Legnago before his approach was realized. The defenders broke down the bridge behind them; but Antonius was safely ensconced on the Adige a very few miles from Hostilia and the Padus crossing. So was accomplished one of the most famous swift strokes of military history.

As soon as the news was known, the Illyrian legions were urgent to take the road. Antonius might seize, but he could

not permanently hold without the support of the heavyweight troops. Two legions were got to Padua by a forced march and seized Verona. A third was on the way. Forces accumulated behind the Adige. Meanwhile the alarm had been given. Cæcina, with some forty thousand Rhinelanders, crossed the Padus at Hostilia and dug in opposite the crossing of Legnago, where Antonius occupied the bridge-head. It was he now who defended the line from Hostilia to Cremona, which Otho had defended; but Cæcina's face (unlike Otho's) was turned north-east towards Illyria.

The war was being fought in the minds and souls of men as much as by their bodies. Had other things been equal the army of Cæcina, superior in numbers and concentrated on the right point, would have swept the Illyrians before its irresistible advance. But other things were not equal. Vitellius had been eating steadily for months. The Rhineland army, after three months of Rome, needed a good deal of the drill-ground to trim it into shape. Valens, who was bringing up reinforcements, was travelling with a harem for company, and Cæcina himself was sick of his friends. Instead of advancing he opened a private correspondence with the enemy commanders, and with the fleet-commander at Ravenna. During the ensuing pause the delayed Illyrian legions were brought one by one up to the front.

Mutiny in the fleet, and surrender to Vespasian, were followed by an attempt on Cæcina's part to lead his own men to a similar transfer of allegiance. Here the results were totally different. The Rhineland army promptly seized Cæcina and put him under restraint. It had no intention of accepting Vespasian. But there was no one in the Vitellian lines capable of taking the place of Cæcina, and as to wait passively might be dangerous, the committee to whom the army had entrusted temporary command determined on an evacuation and retreat to Cremona. Quietly leaving their camp, they recrossed the Padus at Hostilia and took the road for Parma, and so for Cremona. It was a longish way round and the need for haste was pressing.

The moment Antonius realized what had happened he saw the necessity of striking before the enemy had reunited. The whole Illyrian army set out from Verona with the aim of

reaching Cremona first. Passing hot-foot through Betriacum, Antonius made contact with the enemy near Cremona on the third day of his march. The garrison of Cremona, determined to die fighting, had issued out and taken ground two miles from the city. It was evening and Antonius, recognizing that all the advantages were on his side, resolved not to fight until the next day. Hardly had his decision been taken before his scouts reported that the main enemy army from Hostilia, after a last forced march of thirty miles, was pouring into position, and evidently intended to fight. Antonius had no alternative but to accept battle.

At nine o'clock on an October evening the battle of Cremona began. To guide it was impossible, and the Vitellians, at any rate, had no guiding brain. It was a soldiers' battle – a desperate hand to hand struggle. The Vitellians had planted their war engines on the high road and swept away every attack directed against them until two Illyrians succeeded in penetrating up to the machines and cutting the cords. The moon rose on an indecisive battle. The troops paused for a hasty meal while they stood to arms – the Vitellians sharing what they had with their foes. They then resumed fighting; but now the silvery deceptive light was in the eyes of the Vitellians, and the struggle turned against them. Dawn came. As the sun rose above the horizon the Third Legion Gallica, which had been stationed in Syria and had picked up eastern sun-worshipping customs, instinctively faced the luminary and made a collective salute. . . . Their action was the turning point of the struggle. Completely mystified, the other troops caught up a vague rumour that Mucianus and the Syrian legions were at hand, and the Vitellians began to scatter. Victory, complete and overwhelming, followed for the Illyrians. Driven into their fortified camp, the Rhinelanders rallied and turned to bay. A desperate assault by the Illyrians carried the camp.

They had all been marching and fighting continuously for twenty-four hours and, as sometimes happens to excited men under stress of fatigue, they were not so much conscious of weariness as unable to stop. Fatigue can be a dangerous intoxicant poison. Cremona itself, the city, was crowded with visitors to its great commercial fair. The sack of Cremona which began that morning of the twenty-eighth of October in the

year 69, ranks with the great catastrophes of war. For four days the city was in the hands of troops who could not be controlled. Fifty thousand people are reputed to have perished in the fire-gutted shell which was all that finally remained of Cremona.

The amazing adventure of Antonius Primus had up to this point succeeded beyond all reasonable expectations. To complete his work he had now to seize Rome herself. His advance upon Rome was as successful as his campaign against Cremona. It was in the leadership that the cause of Vitellius broke down. Cæcina was a prisoner; Valens a fugitive; Vitellius himself was frequently drunk and when sober was not much the more useful on that account. When his men found themselves at last driven to bay and penned into Rome, their fury knew no bounds. They had made him emperor. Now, when he wished to resign, they would not let him do so. They took care to commit him and themselves beyond all hope of forgiveness. The brother of Vespasian, Flavius Sabinus, together with Vespasian's young son Domitian, the future emperor, and their households, were driven to take refuge in the Capitol. The old citadel was stormed, the temple of Jupiter burned to the ground, Sabinus was murdered, and Domitian only escaped by the devotion of a servant. When the Illyrians, too late to save Sabinus, burst two days later into the city, the first serious street fighting took place that ever was seen in Rome. Street by street they fought their way forward. The last stand of the Vitellians was in the Prætorian fortified camp. When at length the gates were battered in and the fortress was taken by assault, the defenders fell sword in hand without surrender. The unhappy Vitellius, who had tried to hide away, was hauled forth and driven with insult to the Gemonian Stairs – the place of execution – where he was brutally cut down. He had been the least dignified and the least guilty of his party: a lazy, foolish, cowardly, gluttonous man who, as Tacitus says, had the qualities of candour and generosity – and these, after all, are no despicable virtues, whether in emperors or in common men.

X

Not since Sulla returned from Asia had any man looked upon scenes such as those which Mucianus beheld, when at last he reached Rome and took over control from Antonius Primus.

Italy had been devastated. The field of Betriacum was still a festering blood-soaked waste. Cremona was a deserted ruin: Rome itself still the scene of savage reprisals and passionate resistance. Germany was in revolt. Rumours of insurrection in Africa were rife. But the world now began to have some clear idea concerning the root of the trouble. Vespasian, when at last he waddled upon the scene, came as some angelic messenger of peace and restoration. He had planned gentler ways of overthrowing Vitellius, if he had been allowed the time to follow them. In any case, his advent meant the fading of the nightmare that had oppressed the world ever since the death of Nero.

The accession of Vespasian made as decided an era in the history of Rome as the victory of Cæsar. With Cæsar had come in direction and organization and all those wonderful improvements which transformed the prosperity and happiness of the common man. But with Cæsar, also, had come in a definite schism in the social world of Rome, a permanent enmity and antagonism between the old senatorial oligarchy and the new imperial administration. Almost as definitely, a new spirit came in with Vespasian; and while the Cæsarean era had reflected the high aristocratic spirit and severe political probity of its author, the Flavian was no less definitely tinged with the humorous sobriety, the plebeian common-sense, the moderation and compromise of Vespasian. Not only was the new emperor quite undisposed to conduct a reign of terror among the oligarchs – or among any other section of the community – but his very tone and temper were solvents of undue self-importance. His coarse humour smiled away the tragic possibilities. Nor could the proudest oligarch make any dint in the thick hide of a man who not only admitted beforehand his own vulgarity, ignorance and absurdity, but gloried sweetly in these perverse virtues. ‘*Plaustrum*, not *plostrum*,’ urged the philosopher Florus, trying privately to correct the pronunciation of the parvenu emperor; and ‘How is my *Flaurus* to-day?’ next morning enquired the corrected emperor. The laugh was usually on his side.

The virtues of the common Roman, the man in the street, which had appeared prominently upon the stage of history in the person of Gaius Marius, made another appearance in the

person of Vespasian. For ten years he reigned over the Roman dominion. Even on his death-bed, dying of dysentery, he made that grim and courageous joke that 'an emperor should die standing'—not in that other less decorous position which dysentery is liable to compel. And, standing on his feet, upheld by his friends and freedmen, the confirmed jester murmured: 'I rather fancy I am becoming a god!' . . . He had not long to wait. The senate had no hesitation in awarding him the posthumous deification which greater gentlemen than he had failed to win.

Vespasian's tradition was continued by his son and successor, young Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem. Few contrasts could be more striking than that between the coarse old father and the curled and fashionable son, the smiling face of the old jester, and the grave countenance of the young fop. But different as they were, their policy was identical. Titus had been associated from the first with his father's policy of conciliation. All those careful courtesies and studied attentions which Vespasian had paid to the senate were continued by the son. Titus was even capable of a touch of polite humbug at which his father would have laughed. The story is often repeated in which Titus remarked that a day on which he had not helped a friend was a day wasted. Vespasian's own art concealed art with more subtlety.

The reign of Titus was short. Whether he would permanently have sustained his very friendly relations with the senate must remain among the unanswered problems of history; for he died after a reign of less than three years, and was succeeded by his brother Domitian. There was something important even in the very shortness of the reign of Titus. It helped to refound a tradition of peaceful and regular succession which was very much needed, and which helped to stabilize the empire. With Titus vanishes a somewhat mysterious and problematical person with whom we are strangely unacquainted, and whose real character is unaccountably remote; and with Domitian enters a figure of which we have abundant information and full detail, but whose nature is so complex and sophisticated as to baffle any easy understanding. He was a man of strong and decided character, and under the stimulus of his personality the Roman world effected the last stages of its transformation into the new era

CHAPTER XX

THE ANTONINES AND THE COALITION WITH THE SENATE

(A.D. 81 – A.D. 166)

I

In its power and its peculiarity the character of Domitian was worthy of his father Vespasian. In him we see in its full strength, almost for the last time, a type of personality which tends to become rarer and rarer, until it fades out of history – the old Italian type, which had given the world the plebeian statesmen. Domitian possessed that genuine interest in the welfare of the state which is the distinctive note of the type. He had no pretences. He did not conceal the passion he entertained for the processes of government. In this he was like Tiberius, who represented the type on its patrician side. Domitian was conscious of his sympathy with Tiberius. The memoirs of the latter were his favourite book, in which he found both recreation and instruction. Like Tiberius, he was the kind of man who thoroughly enjoyed the drudgery of state – the reading of reports, the study of accounts, the hundred trifles which take up the time and sometimes the temper of the conscientious administrator. The dislike entertained by some men – Tacitus was one – for both Tiberius and Domitian was the hatred of the new citizen of the empire for the strong old Roman character which had ruled him, disciplined him and often oppressed him. The jutting chin, the imperious eye, the expression of power and earnestness in the face of Domitian, hint at a man who had some of the intolerance of a school-master towards faults of negligence and slovenliness.

The government of Domitian completed the work of bringing the empire back to normal. With his sharp eye and commanding personality at the head of things, the machine worked smoothly. The state of the treasury was satisfactory. The

army was not allowed such excessive leisure as to drive it back for recreation upon the desperate expedient of its own thoughts. Agricola's command in Britain saw Roman control extended over the island. The emperor took a *personal interest* in the rectification and re-surveying of the Rhine frontier. With plenty of interesting, and not too arduous work, and their pay raised one-third, there need be no wonder that the troops thought well of Domitian.

For fifteen years the empire had the benefit of firm and strong government. Towards the second half of his reign, Domitian's interest shifted from the north-western to the north-eastern frontier—from Britain and Germany to the Dacian border on the middle Danube.

Some fidgeting on the part of the senate was the result. The oligarchs did not really like the type of man represented by Domitian. They had nothing, so far, to complain of; but he had the eye of a master—and it was known that he preferred to be addressed in a way, and by titles, which irked the old equalitarian spirit. They believed his wars to be gratuitous militarism, merely intended to curry favour with the army. Urgent measures were necessary to improve the condition of Italy itself, and these, in their opinion, should have had precedence over foreign adventure.

The contempt which Domitian felt for these views was natural. He was better informed. The Romanization of Pannonia, Moesia and the whole of the Balkan lands was an inevitable development of the process of expansion which had for so long been in operation; but it brought the Romans into contact with one of the powers which for long had been creating European history. The Dacian power, fortified in its Carpathian cliff-castles, was an ancient and a dominating force which for centuries past had been one of the main instruments which drew the nations into the heart of Europe and drove them forth to the ends of the earth. The Romans had heard of the Phrygians and had read of the Achæans. They had dealt with the Illyrians and fought the Celtic power. Now they came into touch with one of the original engines which had propelled those streams of migrants from central Europe. Dacia was a power like Rome herself—something ultimate.

We cannot understand the course of events if we make the

same mistake that the senate made, and imagine that the Dacian power was small or trifling. It was quite as considerable as the Gallic power with which Julius had wrestled. It was far older and more firmly established. Its earlier rulers had fought the Persian when Rome was in her infancy. In the age of Cæsar, King Burebista of the Dacians had ruled an empire stretching from the Theiss to the Caucasus, including what is now southern Russia. He knew enough of the state of parties in Rome to decide to back Pompeius against Cæsar; his emissaries met Pompeius in conference at Heraclea Lyncestis, and it was only Cæsar's death and the assassination of Burebista himself which postponed the Dacian war that Cæsar planned. Although Burebista's empire had been partitioned, Dacia itself was no weaker than before. Her mountains and her huge stone fortresses were her protection. As the Roman influence spread along the Danube the conflict of interest and authority grew and grew. By the reign of Domitian it had resulted in active collision.

II

Domitian recognized that his difficulties with the senate were due to the still unbroken tradition of its origin. It still remained, after all its vicissitudes, a Roman body, the very virtues of which gave it a Roman point of view. The solidarity, the like-mindedness which still marked it, disqualified it from a broad and universal sympathy. It had struggled to preserve itself – and it had succeeded by destroying its own capacity for ruling an empire.

Domitian was not the first Roman statesman to recognize that the senate was incapable of taking the position in the state which he would readily have allowed it. But he was the first to face the problem with the recognition that action was necessary. The plan which he proposed to himself was to assume the censorial power which hitherto, out of compliment to the senate, the emperors had carefully avoided. By adding the censorship to his other imperial offices he obtained the power of controlling the constitution of the senate and determining its future composition.

The policy of Domitian was not unreasonable and it was not intended to inflict injury upon any person. He was a genial and

a generous ruler always careful for the well-being of his people. But to trench on the independence of the senate instantly led to the same conflict in which Tiberius had been involved, though now for a different reason. Had Domitian possessed children, the consequences might have been different; but he was childless and as soon as the threat of secret conspiracy began to surround him he felt the isolation of his position. Any man might be his hidden rival and foe. The revolt of Lucius Antonius Saturninus on the Rhine drove Domitian to active counter-measures. He hastened to Germany in person, only to find that the revolt was already suppressed. He made the most determined efforts to unearth the threads of the conspiracy. To the aim of punishment he added that of prevention. Torture was employed; the informers and spies were set to work, and a reign of terror began. The lucidity, the determination and the imperiousness of Domitian, concentrated upon such a purpose as this, made it indeed a reign of terror. The hatred inspired in the minds of the senators is reflected in the pages of Tacitus, and in the feelings he betrays. In their eyes Domitian became a monster of iniquity and tyranny, and his reign an age of darkness.

The views of the senators on this head might have made very little difference to the emperor, but another and a very different factor tripped him up. Domitian by no means absolved his own household from the possibility of treason. Whether his suspicions were correct, or whether he overshot his mark and frightened his friends too much will never be known, but a domestic conspiracy certainly was formed, and Domitian was murdered.

III

When the senate met after the death of Domitian its members were intoxicated with joy and relief. His statues were thrown down; his name was erased from every public monument; no public funeral was accorded him. But as soon as they had expressed their feelings, they sat down with surprising calm, in quite a new spirit, to consider the remarkable situation in which they found themselves.

For the second time in twenty-eight years the imperial throne was vacant, and no hereditary claimant could put

forward any right to the reversion. This time, however, the situation had not been complicated by any such confusing event as the revolt of Galba. The empire had simply lapsed; that was all.

Faced in cold blood with this simple issue, the senate was not prepared to show any enthusiasm. The oligarchy had fought and intrigued and conspired to destroy the Cæsars. Now that the Cæsars and the successors of the Cæsars were gone, its mood was changed. Right or wrong, the empire was supported by the army, and to fight the army was impossible. The old diehard families were one by one dropping out of the race. Perhaps the smiles and jests of Vespasian had had their effect. The men who rose to open the business of the session were ready for compromise. The House resolved that as the empire had lapsed, and no candidate presented himself, the senate and People of Rome should choose a suitable person to hold the dignity. It chose one of its own members – M. Cocceius Nerva.

The action of the senate was a startling revolution. A long and gradual series of changes during the preceding thirty years had prepared the way and had softened the hostility which the senate had once felt not merely towards the men who represented the empire, but towards the principle of the empire itself. Step by step with that change, however, a parallel change had modified the character of the men who were at the head of the military guild. The old aristocratic leaders were gone. No Claudio-Julian caste any longer monopolized the higher commands; while since the purge carried out by the Flavian emperors, even the type of Valens and Cæcina was no longer prominent; and the army chiefs who now confronted the senate were milder in character than the one, and higher in type than the other.

We must do the army the justice to bear in mind that only one purely military revolt of any magnitude had hitherto disturbed the peace of the Roman world during the empire – and that was the revolt of the Rhineland legions under Vitellius. The revolt of Galba, like that of Vespasian, had been political, and had originated with the statesmen rather than with the soldiers. On the whole, the army had shown restraint and loyalty. Even now, confronted by so surprising a fact as the

assumption of the empire by a senatorial nominee, it took up a moderate attitude. The military leaders accepted Nerva, although he was not a soldier. They only demanded, and at last obtained in return, the concession that he should adopt as his heir and successor M. Ulpius Traianus, the most influential soldier of their number.

Nerva was an elderly man when he was elected, and his reign barely lasted sixteen months. It was, nevertheless, a reign of extraordinary importance, in which decisions were made which permanently affected the character of the empire and determined its future. When the army chiefs passed over the murder of Domitian, who had had their confidence, it was not out of any especial admiration for an elderly lawyer of pacifist principles. But the whole set of circumstances made the occasion a suitable one for a general reconciliation. The new heads of the army wanted peace at home while they dealt with the Dacian question. The new leaders of the senate wanted a policy of social reform. They compromised by mutual agreement. Hence the solution – Nerva as emperor, Traian as his adopted heir.

The new departure was all the more remarkable because it embodied a new view of the empire. The Cæsarean conception of a hereditary sacred monarchy was now – at any rate for the present – abandoned, and the plan of co-optation was accepted in its place. Neither Traian nor Nerva had the remotest hereditary right to the empire. They were appointed purely on grounds of expediency and merit. It was a plan which would stand or fall by the results it produced.

The new arrangement was an 'understanding' rather than a definite agreement. Its principles were hardly even defined verbally, much less put into writing. No one could point to any constitutional document which bound the parties. What was tacitly assumed was tacitly carried on and handed down; and the new tradition of the Antonine age depended for its perpetuation upon custom and conservatism.

Nothing could be more Roman than this. Roman constitutionalism had always been governed by tradition. For five successive long reigns the tradition now established effectively functioned. Four times (as we shall see) a monarch who was constrained by no law, and bound by no compulsion,

voluntarily selected a successor of a type which posterity has approved and endorsed. We shall presently observe the somewhat curious circumstances under which the Antonine compromise broke up; but in this place we are only concerned to notice those under which it began.

IV

Nerva's short reign shows that the senate had at last grasped the idea that governments are judged by the results they produce. His brief sixteen months were a time of eager social amelioration. The vast reserves accumulated by Domitian were used to reduce taxation, to settle agricultural colonists on the land, and to found that famous system of provision for children – the 'Alimenta' – which was designed to preserve the Italian race. The old tradition, moreover, was no longer descending from Roman father to Roman son with all the old security. It was necessary for the state to adopt an educational policy. That Greek institution, the public school, had already gained a secure foothold in Roman life, and Vespasian had endowed chairs of teaching in more advanced studies. From Nerva's reign dates a keener imperial interest in the adequate instruction of the youth of Italy and the provinces, and imperial encouragement of elementary public instruction. When he died, he left a prosperous and peaceful empire to a successor as humane as himself. Some censorious critics thought Traian a little too fond of the flowing bowl. It is almost the only flaw that any one ever detected in a character the note of which was its moderation. He had not taken up residence at Rome when adopted as heir to the empire; and it was only a year after the death of Nerva that he at last appeared in the capital. During the interval he had inspected the German frontiers and had examined the approaches to Dacia. In Rome he spent two quiet years organizing and preparing for the Dacian campaigns.

The Dacian wars of Traian show us the Roman army of the imperial age at the height of its renown under the command of a general trained in the best traditions of the imperial service. They illustrate the conduct of war by a professional army and a professional commander, employing the least possible amount

of money and the fewest possible men. Traian laid the plans himself and superintended their execution.¹

Setting out in the spring of the year A.D. 101, he crossed the Danube at Vininacium with a strong force, and entered Dacia from the south. His objective was the great knot of mountains in central Dacia, where stood the huge fortification of Sarmizegethusa, the royal palace of King Decebalus. The route was defended by a chain of castles—Arcidava and Berzovia, both of which had been evacuated, and Tibiscum on the head-waters of the river Tibiscus, which was defended. Here, at Tapæ hard by Tibiscum, the Dacians made their stand. A desperate battle ended in a very expensive and hard-won Roman victory. Tibiscum was taken and burnt.

In spite of his victory at Tapæ, Traian did not attempt to advance through the mountains upon Sarmizegethusa. He garrisoned the fortresses he had won and withdrew into Pannonia for the winter. Desultory raiding by the Dacians filled up the winter, but no serious operations.

The next spring, leaving his garrisons to hold the fortresses, Traian crossed the Danube lower down at Pontes, where he had built a permanent brick and stone bridge. From Drobeta he struck eastward until he reached the Alutus river, now called the Alt. This he followed northward. It led him ultimately through the mountains by the Red Tower Pass. His expeditionary force was now due east of Sarmizegethusa, separated from it by the tangled waste of forested mountains. From this point, with immense difficulty, Traian fought his way westward and southward, capturing the tremendous fortresses which held the heart of Dacia in their guardianship. Descending as it were from behind, he came down upon Sarmizegethusa towards the end of the season. Here he was within measurable distance of his garrisons on the Tibiscus. A battle was fought at some place to the north of Sarmizegethusa in which the Dacians were defeated. Sooner than risk a siege, Decebalus surrendered. Traian was willing to grant generous terms. At Aquæ, north-east of Sarmizegethusa, the conference took place. The terms were the usual ones,

¹ Davies, *Trajan's First Dacian War*, J.R.S., VII (1917), and *Topography and the Trajan Column*, J.R.S., X (1920). W. H. Stuart Jones, *Interpretation of the Reliefs of Trajan's Column*, Papers of the British School at Rome, Vol. V, No. 7. Henderson, *Five Roman Emperors*, p. 245.

with the special proviso that all fortresses were to be razed and all territory taken by Decebalus from the Romans was to be restored. The dismantling of the fortresses was the real substance of the treaty.

Traian had every reason to be satisfied with his two years' work. In two campaigns he had reduced a military power of the most formidable nature whose seemingly impregnable defences might have daunted the bravest army and the most confident commander. Julius himself might well have taken pride in the conquest of Dacia.

v

But the terms so made were never carried out in good faith. King Decebalus used the respite he had gained to organize fresh resistance. Two years later the Roman garrisons in old Dacia were surprised; Sarmizegethusa was retaken by Decebalus and a Dacian army passed the Danube and occupied the valley of the Timæus, where it separated the armies of the Upper and Lower Moesia. The whole of Traian's work had been undone.

As soon as the news reached him, the emperor crossed the Adriatic. From Lissus, at the mouth of the Drin, he took the road across the mountains to Naissus. Here he was at the head of the Timæus valley. Picking up the Moesian army at Naissus, he marched to Pontes and arrived in time to relieve the hard-pressed garrison at Drobeta. The winter was spent in preparation. The next spring the fourth Dacian campaign began. Two columns advanced upon Sarmizegethusa, one by Tibiscum and the other by the Alutus Valley and across the mountains. Pressed back upon his capital, and nipped between the two Roman armies, Decebalus a second time fought, and again was conquered. This time there were no terms. Decebalus slew himself; some of his men followed his example; others surrendered. The whole Dacian race was rounded up and expelled from Dacia into the vast lands lying eastward of the mountains. Dacia was made a Roman province, with Sarmizegethusa, under the new name of Ulpia Traiana, as its capital. The land was settled with Roman colonists.

According to Crito, Traian's physician, the emperor seized

and carried off the treasure of the Dacian Kings – a very rich hoard. For one hundred and twenty-three days the people of Rome kept the feast of Traian's triumph. The column which was erected to commemorate the war still survives – one of the most striking and interesting of the monuments of Rome; and the modern inhabitants of Dacia still claim to be the descendants of Traian's colonists.

The conquest of Dacia is one of the most important as well as one of the most picturesque of the wars of the Romans. There are many different points of view from which it may be discussed, but perhaps the most important aspect of the case for us is the probability that the obliteration of Dacia entirely changed the tides and currents of human life in northern Europe. For centuries Dacia had been the rock which barred the peoples of the north-east from the Illyrian lands, and threw the migrations into certain channels and fairways. Now this rock ceased to be. The great fortresses fell into ruins. The Romans did not realize their significance nor their function. When, a few generations afterwards, the Goth and the Hun began to appear, they found nothing to stop them in Dacia. The Romans destroyed in Dacia a buffer-state which, if they could have preserved it, would have been a strong defence to their Danube frontier. Very serious difficulties stood in the way of preservation. Perhaps, on the whole, it was easier for Traian to destroy than to preserve Dacia.

VI

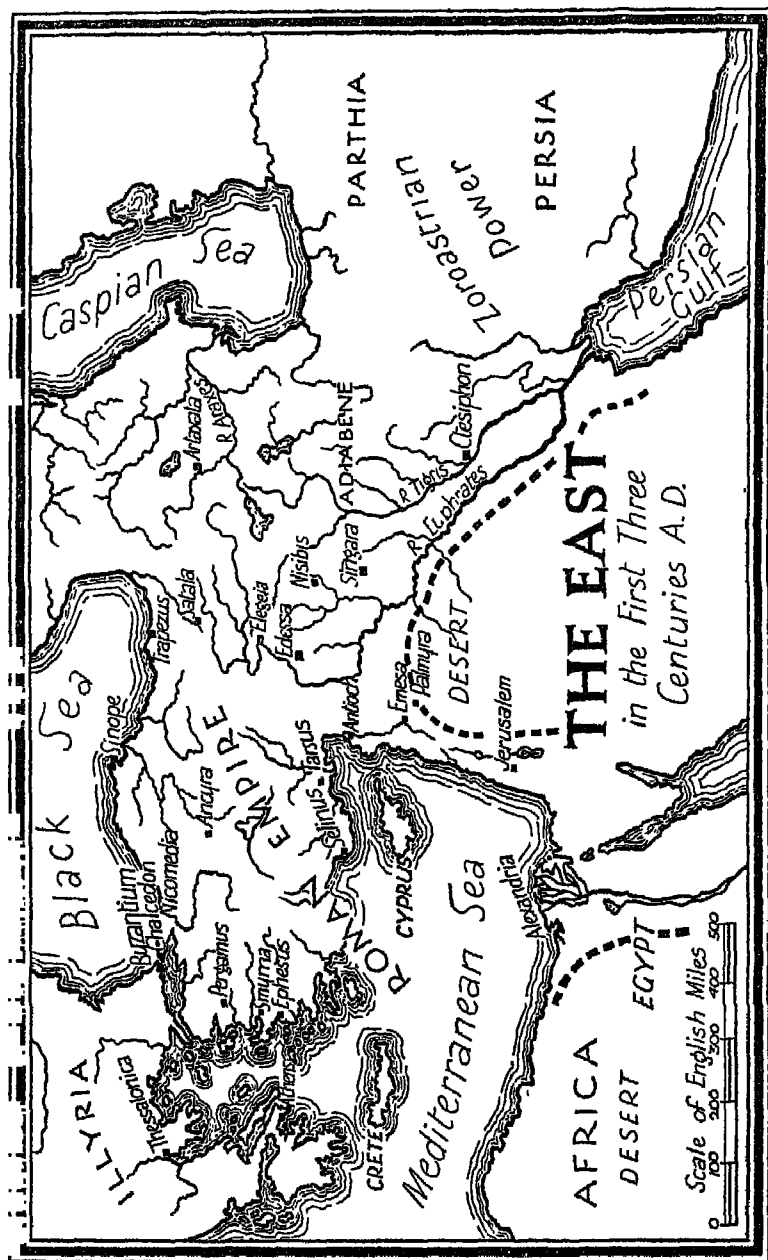
Somewhere at some time – perhaps in his native Italica in Spain, perhaps during the early days of his career – Traian had learned the great lesson of worldly wisdom; that it is not what we do, but the way we do it, that chiefly matters. The world saw only the gentle, humane ruler who contrasted so strangely with the terrible Domitian; it hardly realized the deep, subtle brain behind the gentleness or the truth that Traian did, with a kindly smile, all the things that Domitian had done with imperiousness and majesty. He benignly waved away all the apparatus of terrorism – all the espionage and suspicion that had darkened the last days of Domitian's reign; and before his calm trust the arm of the conspirator and assassin seemed unnerved. He graciously took an oath that

he would never condemn a senator to death. He did not claim the censorial power over the senate. He merely acted as if his possession of it went without saying. Even the oligarchs were dazzled by that serene brow. Of course—he drank; but few of them were likely to decline a cup or two with Cæsar.

The seven years of his reign immediately after the Dacian war were years of peace and social betterment. Builder, legislator, administrator, educator, social reformer — there was no end to Traian's activities; all seemed well with life and man while he stood at the helm of state. He was in sympathy with the world in which he lived—a great secret of success for high and low alike. By his series of reissued coins he reminded the Roman world of its great heritage and of its debt to the statesmen and leaders who had been its forerunners. Former emperors had reissued coins commemorating their immediate predecessors. Traian went further—he commemorated the old heroes of the oligarchy, such as Sulla, Pompeius Magnus and Decius Mus. He did his best to create the feeling that there was now no distinction of party within the state, and that the principate summed up and included the whole tradition of Rome.

Fortune waited upon him, and turned to gold everything he touched. He was allowed, before he died, a reward that must have been very sweet to his soul; to see, like Alexander, the streets of Babylon, and to look upon the waters of the Persian Gulf.

There had been correspondence between King Decebalus of Dacia and the Parthian King. Nothing had come of it, but from that time onward the relation between Rome and Parthia became less friendly. In A.D. 113 the Parthian King, in defiance of all treaty rights, deposed the King of Armenia appointed by Traian. The emperor at once declared war and set out for the east. He declined to consider the compromise suggested by the Parthians. It was typical of his luck in all things that the Parthians had challenged him just when internal dissensions made them least able to encounter the power of Rome. Traian determined to take the opportunity of transforming Armenia into a Roman province; and he also resolved to carry out the old plan of Julius, and to conquer Parthia.



The East in the First Three Centuries A. D.

After a year spent in training the Syrian army—which needed a little attention after long neglect—he entered Armenia in force. There was a grand conference at Satalia, at which representatives of all the tribes of the Caucasus met the emperor. Not since Pompeius Magnus chased Mithradates into Colchis had there been anything quite so interesting. Traian had an interview at Elegeia with Parthomasiris the Parthian candidate and refused his homage. Armenia was transformed into a Roman province. In a second campaign a year later he entered Mesopotamia, and occupied the country as far south as Singara. Here he wintered and organized Mesopotamia as a province.

In the third campaign he advanced eastward from Nisibis, crossed the Tigris, and took possession of Adiabene, under the new title of the province of Assyria. Recrossing the Tigris he marched south and, practically unopposed, entered the city of Ctesiphon, where the Parthian kings had their court. He captured the great royal throne of the Parthians, as well as the King's sister; but to those who remembered the hill-fighting in Dacia, this Parthian war must have seemed a very soft kind of warfare. From Ctesiphon, Traian advanced as far as the mouth of the Tigris. Here he saw the Persian Gulf, and with his own eyes watched a ship making ready to sail for India.

He was recalled by a revolt in Mesopotamia, and by the news of unrest throughout the eastern provinces. He returned to Syria, which he reached in April A.D. 117, after an absence of two years. Later in the year he set out westward, travelling by the coast road along the shore of Asia Minor. At Selinus, in western Cilicia, overlooking the Pamphylian Gulf, the great emperor was seized with paralysis and—rather more suddenly than he or any one else expected—breathed his last. He was only sixty-four.

He had had much trouble in settling upon his successor. No one seems quite to have fulfilled his hopes. When the end approached, he had not yet made any formal nomination. The details of what happened are obscure, and can never now be cleared up; but he seems to have made it plain to those about him that his intention was to name his kinsman P. Ælius Hadrianus, then governor of Syria. Though not without

his faults, Hadrian had qualities which recommended him to Traian; a calm and good-natured temperament, a genuine impersonal interest in the world and man, an unusually wide culture, and a gift for getting through a great deal of work without too much trouble. On the ninth of August, Hadrian, at Antioch, received the Letters of Adoption by which Traian co-opted him to the principate. The next day he learnt that Traian had died on August the eighth.

Were the letters genuine? Even at the time it was a common belief that the empress Plotina was their real author and was responsible for sending them to Hadrian. But whether this be so or not it seems probable that Hadrian was the man whom the dying emperor intended to nominate and that if Plotina supplied the requisite letters she merely carried out the wishes which she knew to be entertained by her husband.¹

VII

With the accession of Hadrian a great stillness seems to descend upon the whole Roman world, as if the gale, sometimes freshening to storm, which hitherto had blown the ship of state upon its way, had ceased, and that calm had come which presages a change of wind, and the blowing of the tempest from another quarter. Some of the reasons which may have made Traian hesitate so long over the nomination of Hadrian are visible in the new emperor's first actions. He evidently dissented from the policy of extending the bounds of the empire. He now abandoned the new provinces of Assyria and Mesopotamia, and returned Armenia to its former status. His policy was the preservation and development of the existing empire. He cared little for adventures abroad. His reign was an important one in the story of Rome; but the whole of its importance comes from the internal changes, resettlements, reorientations which modified the nature of men and the meaning of institutions without affecting them externally.

We may pick out three aspects of this transition.

It is to the reign of Hadrian that we commonly date the first visible signs of the rise of bureaucracy in the Roman

¹ Henderson, *Life and Principate of Hadrian*, pp. 34-37. For the evidence of coins, see H. Mattingly, *Some Historical Coins of Hadrian*, *J.R.S.*, XV (1925), p. 211 ff.

empire. Hitherto the typical unit of social organization had been the aristocratic household with its lord, its lady, its small (and constantly less certain) family, its clients, freedmen and slaves. Such households were highly organized and self-sufficing societies, which in many or most cases supplied their own necessities from the resources of their own landed estates and domestic workshops,¹ and gave their members an elementary education and a training in administration which needed no external assistance. They resembled modern industrial firms rather than any type of 'household' that we could recognize by such a name. Although its servile members might be recruited from all quarters, they were almost as frequently born into the service of the estate, and were children of old servants who had spent their lives in it. When manumitted, the freedmen continued to be associated with the household as members of its organization. Roman society had built itself on this model as its basis. The result had been that when Augustus founded the imperial administration, the emperors governed the vast Roman dominion by exactly the same social organization as the consuls had employed on a much smaller scale before them. Their household staff was indeed more numerous than that of any other man, their revenue was greater, their transactions were upon a larger scale, but Julius as consul and dictator, and Augustus as triumvir and princeps, both alike worked through the organized household. The 'imperial civil service' of Rome was nothing else than Cæsar's household. The ministers of state were Cæsar's private secretaries. We have seen something of the careers of those extraordinary men, Pallas and Narcissus. They were far from being the only examples of the kind. Claudius Etruscus, a freedman of Tiberius, lived under ten emperors, six of whom died violent deaths; he died rich, respected and unharmed, at an advanced age, a proof that men who did their duty and stuck to business were still left in peace by their contemporaries.

One of the changes that came about under the emperors of the coalition was a change in this mode of organization. Natural as it had been at the start, it soon revealed objectionable features. Men of senatorial rank loathed the necessity of doing business – and often of currying favour – with ministers

¹ Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 118.

of very much lower social status than themselves; and when fuming senators discoursed of the intolerable tyranny of the Cæsars, they often meant only the intolerable necessity of flattering, bribing and cajoling Cæsar's servants. When Nerva—a man of the oligarchy—took over the imperial household, it was felt that at last a man had arrived who would put down the proud freedman. All the same, the story survives that Hadrian himself only won his advancement by diplomatic politeness to Traian's freedmen. Hadrian, after his accession, showed that he sympathized with the senatorial point of view. He began a process of reform which ended in extensive changes in the nature of the imperial civil service, and ultimately in that of the imperial government.

The reform of Hadrian consisted of blending into the imperial household, as it had hitherto been constituted, a new element—men of equestrian rank, who were not bound to him as part of his domestic entourage, but by the direct man-to-man bond which later ages learnt to call 'fealty.' Earlier emperors had employed this expedient casually and occasionally; Hadrian did it with system and started a custom which developed. Freedmen ceased to be his secretaries and in their place Roman *equites* took office. This amounted to the creation of a civil service parallel with the army; it gradually gave to the civil administration an independent organization such as the army had enjoyed; and Cæsar came to be surrounded not only with soldiers but with civilians who, though his men and his followers, were free born and carried with them the breath of this freedom. . . . There was to come a time, far in the future, when proud aristocrats did not disdain to fill the posts of servants in kingly and imperial households—when earls were grand butlers and counts were constables. It was with this reform of Hadrian that the tendency began. From this time the emperor was no longer *primus inter pares*. He was marked off from the senatorial oligarchy by a genuine distinction in kind—he was the head of this system of administration, the like of which no ordinary senator possessed. To be in his employment was a totally different thing from being in the employment of any one else.

Hadrian also changed the old informal drawing-room meeting of the Friends of Cæsar into something new; the

consilium which began to take definite shape under Hadrian was a formal body with paid members of high technical qualifications. He submitted all appointments for the approval of the senate – but what did that matter? The mere existence of such a *consilium* implied a subtraction from the real authority of the senate.

Then, in addition to these changes, there was a change in the composition of the army, which first appears as a serious innovation in the reign of Hadrian. The theory, so far, had been that the legions were composed of Roman citizens, if not of Italian birth at any rate of Italian race, who were members of communities in Italy or the provinces. With the gradual rise of the level of civilization on the frontiers, retiring veterans had elected with increasing frequency to take allotments of land in the old familiar districts where they had spent their years of service, and to bring up their children to enter the old service with which their forefathers had been associated. Natural as the tendency was, it represented exactly the danger against which the senatorial tradition had always fought – the dispersion and differentiation of the nucleus round which Roman dominion had been built up. For a time it had seemed as if the army would provide one means of preserving the unity and likeness of the Roman type. This probability began to be imperilled when the system of local recruitment received official toleration.

The third aspect of the transition was the struggle of religions. Quietly, almost unnoticeably, an improvement in manners and a softening of character had spread over the Roman world. Two long periods of peace had had their effect. Something of the same development of humane feeling which separates the eighteenth century from the seventeenth separated the second from the first. This was especially apparent in the treatment of slaves. The very meaning of the word 'religion' seemed to have undergone a change. In the days of the great Scipio it had still meant auspices, omens and the invocation of divine help. A little later, under Julius, it had begun to mean a half sceptical speculation, and a sullen hope. But now on all hands it was becoming a passionate faith, an earnest trust that things were better than they seemed. The old religion of Camillus, which Augustus had loved and Domitian had

PLATE VII



Imperator Cæsar
DOMITIAN
Augustus



Imperator NERVA
Cæsar *Augustus*



Imperator Cæsar Nerva TRAIAN *Augustus*



Imperator Cæsar Traian
HADRIAN
Augustus



Imperator Cæsar T. Iulius
Hadrianus ANTONINI'S
Augustus PIUS

(From Coins in the British Museum)

supported, had now become a variety of Stoicism – a faith which had had its martyrs and was to have its saints. Everywhere men seemed to be waiting impatiently for a happier message and a more inspiring creed. Mithraism was spreading through the army. Christianity, hidden under the surface, was increasing in the cities. All these various beliefs were growing to be indispensable sources of encouragement and guidance which for their votaries gave life its savour. But in virtue of this fact they were also becoming things for which men would fight with fury.

Hadrian himself, a typical product of his age and class, was a citizen of this new cosmopolitan world of the empire. He had no children – which was typical enough; he had no dynastic ambition – which was also typical; he had no aim in life but a desire to promote the wealth, prosperity and happiness of his subjects. A curious spirit, too subtle to be called pessimism, too vague to be called optimism, weighed upon him – as if he were ready to hear the news that he had been a good and faithful servant, but that neither he nor the world he lived in was good enough to pass the scrutiny of the divine powers, and that the time was coming when they must all be cast into the melting-pot ready for a new heaven and a new earth. Most of his reign was spent in long journeys of inspection in all parts of the empire. The world which he looked upon so dispassionately looked with equal dispassion upon him. As Fronto wrote to Marcus Aurelius: 'I felt great reverence for him but I was not bold enough to entertain affection for him.' So felt most men.

VIII

Hadrian himself thought deeply over the problem of the succession. He had adopted Lucius Ælius Verus, who died before him. By a curious association of ideas he seems then to have thought of the children of Verus. They were, however, too young. Ultimately he chose the brother-in-law of Verus, a man named Titus Aurelius Antoninus. As Antoninus had no sons, the stipulation was that he should adopt two sons to be his heirs and successors – one of them his nephew, Marcus Annius Verus; the other, Lucius Ælius Verus the younger, the son of the man who had died. This was done. Now Marcus Annius Verus was the man whom we commonly know as Marcus Aurelius.

Was all this in real accord with the conception of that coalition which Nerva had begun? It is hard to say. Such a choice as that of Antoninus silenced all objections. Antoninus was the perfect product of Roman republicanism at its best; a man, gentle, kindly, immensely good-natured, yet with a dignity none could deny and with an impressively handsome person. Hardly any man who ever sat upon a throne can be compared with him for the natural gifts and graces of manhood. A touch of fine humour prevented him from being a prig. He had no history; and under his rule the Roman empire had no history either.¹ He left his mark upon Roman law through certain judicial decisions which show his humanity and intelligent good-feeling. His character has been described by one who knew him intimately and was entitled to speak of him – his adopted son Marcus Aurelius. . . . Like Hadrian himself, Antoninus owes some of his perfection to the stillness of air about him. Nothing ruffles him or disorders him; no gust of fate blows him over; no storm beats upon him. He was never tried in the fire of suffering. For twenty-four years he reigned – nearly quarter of a century; a happy man, a happy country. When he died, even his successor, young Marcus, felt that there could never be another like him. He was right.

The very year that Antoninus died and the joint emperors Marcus and Lucius succeeded, the first gusts of the storm came that were to take the empire aback and very nearly to overwhelm it. The Parthians, having now recovered from the period of dissension which had rendered them so helpless before Traian, once more began their interference with the affairs of Armenia. A serious Roman defeat at Elegeia was followed by a Parthian invasion of Syria. Marcus Aurelius, though more famous as a writer than a soldier, was a competent and above all a hard-working man. He at once prepared for a serious Parthian war. Troops were drafted from every part of the empire. Lucius Verus was sent to take the nominal command. Lucius was a grand and imposing figure who earnestly and

¹ Nothing can make the career of Antoninus Pius exciting, but Mr. E. E. Bryant in *The Reign of Antoninus Pius* (Cambridge, 1894) has assembled all the facts concerning him. Mr. Bryant points out (p. 3) that although Antoninus lived in the very noonday of Roman civilization, we are driven back upon archaeological evidence for a very large proportion of our knowledge of him.

faithfully carried out the instructions of his less imposing, but much wiser brother and colleague. Armenia was soon reconquered by Stabilius Priscus, who captured and destroyed Artaxata (which, long before, Lucullus had failed to take) and set up a Roman nominee. As soon as Armenia was secure, the grand campaign began. Avidius Cassius penetrated as far as Ctesiphon, which he took and burnt. The Parthians had had enough and cried quarter. A peace was concluded that left the prestige of Rome high in the east.

All this was very satisfactory. The power and repute of Rome had certainly not suffered from the government of the philosopher emperor. The two emperors celebrated a grand double-triumph; after which the troops who had taken part in the campaign were hastily dispersed back to their stations. During their stay at Ctesiphon some kind of epidemic had broken out among them. Its nature was hardly realized; and the steps necessary to combat it were not known. It did not disappear with their return to a more temperate climate. It increased; it spread to the civil population; and as drafts had been taken from almost every military centre in the empire, the epidemic was carried back thither on their return. It not only spread – it began to take on frightening proportions. It was the Plague.

IX

The disaster which now fell upon the Roman empire was as appalling as it was unexpected. At long intervals in history a devastating pestilence has come out of the unknown east, and has carried death and destruction before it throughout the west. The last famous case had been the plague which broke out in Athens during the Peloponnesian War. Now the stage was greater and the catastrophe more visible. Many parts of Italy were left desert of inhabitants. Untold thousands died in Rome itself. The imperial government had to come to the rescue and organize the burial of those who died. Nothing could be done to stop its spread or to soften its ravages. The Rome to which Marcus Aurelius succeeded as emperor was at the very height of its prosperity. Never before had so large a part of Europe been united under one government; never before had that government been so humane, so enlightened, so full of

the will to help and protect those it ruled; never had so large a part of Europe enjoyed the blessings of peace, justice and prosperity. And on this scene of prosperity and happiness came an abrupt fade-out. For a moment we lose sight of it and cannot trace in any detail the particulars of what occurred, although from the description left us on the occasion of other great plagues we can guess some of them. When, after a brief interval, the picture starts to life again, the things and the persons which formerly distinguished it are still there, but it has suffered a curious change. Rome had passed some crisis, some dividing line; the calm in which she has dwelt so long has ended and a wind now is blowing her to another quarter than that to which so long she had been progressing.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SEVERI : THE DESTRUCTION OF THE COALITION

(A.D. 167 - A.D. 268)

I

Antoninus Pius may possibly have owed some of his Olympian serenity to the calm of the world about him; but no one can say the same of Marcus Aurelius. There have been periods of later history in which men fancied that Marcus must necessarily have failed to reconcile the task of governing an empire with that of writing famous and widely read books on Stoic morals. The modern world, better acquainted with the relationship of work and leisure, can more easily believe in his success. Like those banker-philosophers and stockbroker-missionaries who are familiar types to us, Marcus found no difficulty in harmonizing an earnest attention to business with the cultivation of a life of thought. He was, after all, by no means an ornamental type of man. Conscious that he was short, podgy and inelegant of build, he left the decorative aspects of life to his colleague Lucius Verus. Like many men of imperfect health, he made up for his deficiencies by an almost ascetic simplicity and severity of life. He worked hard and thought hard. He had very little sympathy with the merely soft and sweet. His theories were founded upon experience, and were intended to influence the practice of life. His faults were not faults of undue sentimentality.

All his grit and determination were necessary to him in the years immediately after the great catastrophe. Amid the trouble and dislocation which followed the pestilence he kept his head and preserved his courage. It was almost at once obvious that vast disturbances and changes were taking place in central Europe. The centre of the trouble was on the lower Elbe, the land of the Saxons and Langobardi. A large number

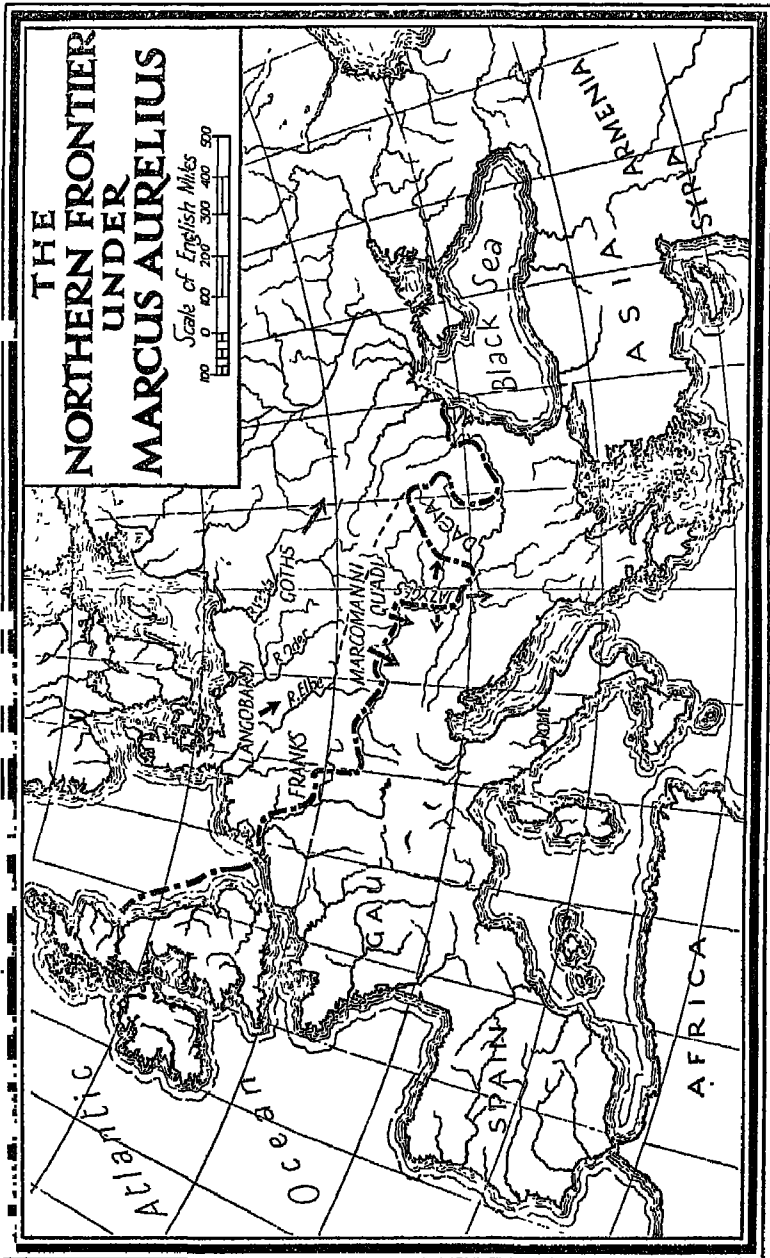
of Langobardi, marching up the Elbe valley, had appeared in Pannonia, requesting from the Romans permission to settle. This could not be allowed, and they were turned back whence they had come – that is to say, into Bohemia, where the Marcomanni and Quadi dwelt, and where the head streams of the Elbe have their source. These peoples could not harbour them, so the king of the Marcomanni took up their case and tried to obtain consideration for it. It was, however, refused. Serious movements and changes must have been troubling all the peoples of Germany. There was pressure on the Rhine frontier, and some fighting.

The refusal of land to the Langobardi evidently produced a serious state of affairs across the border. A great tribal league was formed with the object of coercing the Roman government. When the Jazyges, the horse-breeding tribe between the Danube and the Theiss, joined this league, the results were such as the Roman world had not seen since the days of Marius and the Cimbri. Dacia was overrun, and Sarmizegethusa threatened. Rætia, Noricum and Pannonia, attacked simultaneously from the north and the east, fell into the hands of the invaders.¹ Italy itself was entered. Aquileia was beleaguered, and Opitergium, half way from Aquileia to Verona, was destroyed. The Roman defences were carried away. Only Dacia partly held out, and proved a breakwater against the passage of the flood eastwards.

Vast preparations on the part of the Roman government were necessary, just at the moment when they were least practicable. Men were difficult to get, and taxes were impossible to raise. Land had remained untilled, and famine was abroad. Marcus sold the imperial jewels to raise money. By desperate efforts, adequate means of defence were got together. The two emperors took personal command upon the Danube.

A tribal league is one of the feeblest forms of association known to man. As soon as the Roman advance began, many of the bold invaders prudently fled with all they could lay their hands upon. The Quadi proposed to come to an agreement with the government. Only the Marcomanni were ready to fight. There were embarrassments for the Romans in the fact that the invaders held hostages in the persons of the captives they

¹ See map on opposite page.



The Northern Frontier under Marcus Aurelius

had driven off. Marcus accordingly came to terms with the Quadi, on condition that all prisoners were returned. There were over sixty thousand. The Jazyges had driven off far more; but these could not be recovered. Some of the invaders were taken into Roman pay as auxiliary troops: and by this means the number of enemies to be fought was brought down to a reasonable figure.

For five years Marcus and the Danube legions waged war against the Marcomanni and the Jazyges. It was a difficult and a severe war, in which the Romans suffered reverses and at first failed of success. Lucius Verus found it too much for him. He died, leaving the stalwart philosopher to carry on alone. The Quadi rebelled again, and joined in the war. At length three great campaigns saw the reduction successively of the Marcomanni, the Quadi, and the Jazyges. The war had lasted eight years.

It had been the intention of Marcus, now that he had been obliged to do the work of reducing Jazygia and Bohemia, to keep them within the fold of civilization and order. He was already half-way down the Elbe. A line drawn from the northern end of Dacia, to include Jazygia and Bohemia, only needed to be prolonged a little to complete the Elbe frontier which Augustus once had contemplated. The conquest of Bohemia made all the difference, and rendered the conquest of western Germany a possible task. The whole history of Europe might have been changed if this plan had been carried out. But on the very verge of its execution success was struck from the emperor's grasp. The revolt of Avidius Cassius in Syria interrupted his policy and for a time called him to the east. When he returned, it was too late.

Avidius Cassius was an able man, as his conquest of Mesopotamia proves, and in many respects he was a man of admirable character. But success turned his head. He objected to the philosophic recreations of Marcus. On hearing of the revolt, the emperor started for Syria. He arrived to find the situation unexpectedly changed. The revolt had petered out. Avidius Cassius had been killed by his own supporters.

Marcus regretted the whole incident. He treated the family of the unfortunate rebel with kindness, and discouraged the senate from any demonstrations of vengeance. As he said in his

copy-book way: 'Vengeance for a personal wrong is never pleasing in an emperor.' But the personal aspect was the least important part of the crime of Avidius Cassius.

The temporary absence of Marcus had been fatal to his plans. The Marcomanni and Quadi, given a short breathing time, had at once revolted, and all the work was to do again. For three years more he fought them. The Marcomanni were subdued; the Quadi wished to abandon their lands and move northwards down the Elbe to join the Semnones – but they were not allowed to do so; the Jazyges surrendered. At the critical moment the strength of Marcus gave out. On March 17th A.D. 180, he died at Vindobona, where Vienna now stands. His work was sufficiently complete to prove that with time it could have been finished; it was so far incomplete that unless some man like himself came forward to carry it to completion, it would never be finished. What man could come forward?

II

Here we reach one of the strange crises and unaccountable problems of Roman history. The podgy old Stoic lay dead at Vindobona, and by him stood a tall, athletic, extremely handsome young man of eighteen years old – his son, Lucius Ælius Aurelius Commodus. His son? There were people at the time who doubted it. How could that popinjay spring from the old owl? There were whispers, and scandal. And yet what was the difficulty? Had not the boy's maternal grandfather, the emperor Antoninus Pius, been a magnificently handsome man? What did people expect? With a crowd of consuls and two emperors among his immediate ancestors, and all that money and love could bring to make him a man, why should not the boy be a fine one? The real trouble was different: it consisted in the question why he should exist at all.

The coalition between the principate and the senatorial oligarchy had been an artificial measure, created by the deliberate will of the two parties, not by any inherent tendency towards union. So far from there being any spontaneity in the coalition, the parties tended, left alone, to drift rapidly apart on contrary courses. The coalition was bound to come

to an end at the moment at which either of them once more steered into the swift current of logical continuity. Hadrian, though he had no children, had toyed with the idea of co-opting Lucius Ælius Verus, who had heirs. When Verus died, it became necessary to co-opt Antoninus Pius, a man of the senatorial side of the coalition. Yet, in spite of his political associations, and in spite, too, of that genuine spirit of republican equality which was a second nature to him, Antoninus felt it his duty to preserve the claims of the Ælian family and to protect the interest of the children. Even a modern legitimist might have felt that there was something shadowy about the hereditary rights of heirs whose ancestors had been co-opted, but had never reigned. Yet Antoninus, of all men, carried forward the claims. When he himself co-opted Marcus Aurelius, it was on condition that Marcus accepted the younger Verus as a partner. Ill luck dogged the Ælian family, for this young man died without heirs. But Antoninus had done something still more interesting: he had married Marcus to his own daughter. Can he have done it wholly without thought of the possible consequences? When the obvious happened, and a son was born to Marcus, the child possessed certain qualifications which could not be ignored. He was the son of a reigning emperor, and he was also the grandson of an emperor, both of whom were deeply respected by their contemporaries, and highly admired by later generations. The mere existence of such a man created a situation which dissolved the coalition. Eight men out of ten would instinctively have thought that Commodus possessed a claim to the empire which could not in justice be set aside. Many men agreed, who would gladly have denied it if they could.

How did Marcus, the philosopher-emperor, drift into this position, of leaving an heir with a hereditary claim so strong that no co-opted heir was even thinkable as a rival? Surely Marcus, of all men, might have been expected to perpetuate the system of co-optation which had given the empire that wondrous line of rulers from Nerva onwards? Not only is it the fact that he did not perpetuate it but it is obvious that from the first he never thought of any successor other than his own son.

From all these considerations we can see that the coalition

broke up by some cause inherent in itself. Splendid as its success had been, magnificent as had been the succession of able and wise emperors, there had been an unmistakable suggestion all along that the whole thing was a splendid fluke. Did Nerva adopt Traian? Why, Traian was forced upon him by the army! Did Traian adopt Hadrian? We have seen for ourselves the doubts about that! Did Hadrian adopt Antoninus? Only as a desperate afterthought! All of them had endless worry over the problem of their successor, and all must have realized the element of pure luck that entered into it. They could not go on indefinitely without children. As soon as one of them had a presentable son, the result was a foregone conclusion... and Commodus was extremely presentable.

So Commodus stepped up to the imperial throne with a smile, and lightly took possession of it. No emperor before him had ever had an imperial father and grandfather: none had ever possessed blood so deep in the dye as his! He was an excellent advertisement for imperial breeding. Besides his good looks, he had the eye of a hawk, a hand firm and strong, and a clear brain. One thing he did not possess – and that was Stoic principles. That mysterious process which often takes place in children, causing them to react with violence from some strong characteristic of their parents, had taken place in Commodus. He disliked philosophy. He liked fast horses, the roaring of lions, the scent of a woman's hair, the smell of blood. He delighted in material things. Not only did he react from the moral ideas of his father, but also from his political ideas. Almost his first important decision was to abandon the project of an Elbe frontier. Instead of organizing the new provinces of Jazygia and Marcomannia, he granted a modified independence to the tribesmen, and left them to live their own lives and manage their own affairs as long as they kept out of the Roman provinces.

He may have had good reason. He knew the state of the treasury, and whether it was possible to maintain provincial governments in the heart of Germany at the cost of the rest of the empire. In doing what he did, he followed the policy of Hadrian and of Tiberius.

III

For three years, little change took place in the government. The first serious change began when Commodus was attacked one night by an assassin, who ran upon him from a dark corner, crying: 'The senate sends you this!' He was instantly caught, and turned out to be Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus. The identity of this man was curious. The emperor's sister Lucilla, the daughter of Marcus, had been the wife of Lucius Verus; and after the death of Verus she had been married to an elderly senator named Pompeianus, who hailed from Antioch. The would-be murderer of Commodus was the son of this man by a former marriage, and therefore Lucilla's stepson.

Investigation revealed a widespread conspiracy, of which Lucilla, jealous of her brother's higher position, had been the silly tool. The startled and shocked Commodus found that a pit of Tartarean blackness yawned at his unconscious feet. The oligarchy, against whom he was guiltless of any fault, had been unable to endure the spectacle of an emperor descended from emperors. The thought that Commodus was the son of Marcus was apparently too much for them; the thought that he was the grandson of Antoninus Pius was intolerable. The wrath of Commodus was aroused. He was conscious of impeccable claims to the throne and of perfect innocence of wrong. Once he was started upon the task of investigation, the interest of the work led him on. The delators were once more revived. All the old apparatus of detection, which Tiberius and Domitian had employed, was brought into use, and Commodus was rewarded by confiscations which, like betting on a horse race, lent a sporting interest to the event. He answered the senatorial conspiracy by ceasing to employ senators in military appointments. The old schism had reappeared in as hopeless a form as before.

The reign of Commodus now rapidly became a masked civil war. He was far too popular to be overthrown by direct action. At least two military plots and one rising in Rome had to be dealt with, but he survived them. His sympathy with the popular sports, the gladiatorial fights and wild-beast baiting, though one that we may not share, made his position impregnable. He was clever enough to exploit the advantage. He

SIXTH CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(PERIOD OF WEAKNESS AND COLLAPSE)

Comparative Scale	A.D.		
1830	180	Death of Marcus Aurelius. Accession of COMMODUS	180
	183	Conspiracy of Lucilla	
	186-7	Conspiracy of Maternus	
1840	190	192 (Dec. 31) MURDER OF COMMODUS	192
		193 PERTINAX; DIDIDIUS JULIANUS; Accession of SEPTIMIUS	193
		194 Pescennius Niger defeated and slain [SEVERUS	
		195 Invasion of Mesopotamia	
1850	200	196 CARACALLUS created Cæsar	
		197 Clodius Albinus defeated and slain at Lyons	
		198 Capture of Ctesiphon. CARACALLUS becomes Augustus	
		208 Campaign in Britain	
1860	210	211 Death of Septimius Severus. Accession of CARACALLUS	
		217 Murder of Caracallus. MACRINUS seizes power	217
		218 Bassianus defeats and succeeds Macrinus as ELAGABALUS	218
1870	220	222 Murder of Elagabalus. Accession of Severus ALEXANDER	
			Rule of the 'Syrian Trust'
1880	230		
		235 Murder of Alexander. Election by Army of MAXIMIN	235
		238 Revolt of the GORDIANS. Murder of Maximin	
1890	240 Elevation by Senate of BALBIENUS and PUPBIENUS	
		GORDIAN III survives [Their death	
		244 Murder of Gordian III. Election by Army of PHILIP	
1900	250	249 Philip slain Accession of DECIVS	
		251 Decius slain in battle. Election by Army of GALLVS	
		253 Gallus slain. Senate and Army agree to elect VALERIAN	
		Gallienus associated in the empire	
1910	260	Valerian defeated and captured by the Persians	
		{ROME STRUGGLING FOR EXISTENCE against internal schism and barbarian invasion	
		268 Gallienus dies, nominating as his successor a soldier CLAUDIVS II	
1920	270	270 Claudius II dies, nominating as successor a soldier AURELIAN	
		275 Aurelian murdered. The Senate elect TACIVS	
		276 Death of Tacitus. The Army elects PROBUS	
1930	280		
		282 Probus murdered. The Army elects CARVS	
		283 Death of Carus. He is succeeded by CARINVS and NUMERIAN	
		284 The Army elects DIOCLETIAN, who seizes power	284
			Period of Recovery

appeared in the arena himself – the only Roman emperor who was ever qualified to do so. As ‘Paulus, the celebrated Swordsman,’ he posed for his statue and tickled the taste of the mob. To the horror of the oligarchs he was merely indifferent.¹

Driven out of all their positions, the oligarchs succeeded in suborning those nearest to him. He was too dangerous to deal with directly. His mistress Marcia gave him a cup of drugged wine, and while he was helpless under its influence, a professional wrestler strangled him.

The man at the back of the conspiracy was Publius Helvius Pertinax, who, the next morning, was invested by the senate with the various powers of the principate.

IV

The army had been jockeyed. It took some time before the facts of the situation thoroughly penetrated to the consciousness of the Prætorian guard. Pertinax was a man of a most obnoxious type – he was the son of a freedman who had made money as a timber merchant; and he was moreover a sanctimonious humbug who covered his greed and his ambition by the Catonic pose. The essential features of his position were that he rejected the hereditary element in the principate, declined the title of Augusta for his wife, and put forward no claim on behalf of his son. He tried to express, in fact, the senatorial view of what the principate ought to be like; and he proceeded to secure this position by a popular programme of economy and reform. It might have been wiser first to convince the army of his sincerity: for its attitude would be the decisive factor. For nearly three months the Prætorians gazed on Pertinax with incredulity and suspicion. At last they concluded that he was no Marcus, and that his noble sentiments were a lie. A deputation of the guard broke into

¹ Dion Cassius, LXXIII, 1–20 (quite accessible in the Loeb translation), and Herodian, I, 18–48. The latter, however, has not been translated into English for over a century. If there is the faintest truth in Herodian's account of the shooting exploits of Commodus, the emperor must have been an athlete whose likeness to Hercules was not quite so fanciful as some people suppose. The Life by Lampridius in the Augustan Histories is the production of embittered and scurrilous hatred, and should be treated with the caution it deserves. For the views of Septimius Severus see below, p. 466.

the palace, murdered him, and stuck his head up over the gate of the camp.

The action of the Prætorians was perhaps an impulsive comment upon the policy of the oligarchy rather than a considered and politic measure. Now that they had killed Pertinax, they were puzzled what next to do. They had no candidate of their own. Their officers – no doubt with a view to the establishment, if necessary, of alibis – had quietly disappeared. The situation was a difficult one.

It was in these circumstances that news was brought to an elderly senator, Didius Julianus, that old Sulpicianus, the father-in-law of Pertinax, was still in the camp, trying to stay the rot, and offering a high bonus to the troops. The old sportsman, conscious perhaps of his unworthiness as a man and a statesman, suddenly remembered that there were other qualifications. He too had a bank account and a strong room! He hurried to the spot. From the foot of the rampart he called up to the men lining the wall. As soon as they realized that Julianus was offering a higher price, they fell into the mood of the thing. Sulpicianus was informed; and for some time the delighted Prætorians had the unique sensation of putting the empire up to auction. The article was ultimately knocked down to Julianus for a sum of twenty-five thousand sesterii per man; and he had the thrilling experience of sitting upon the throne of Augustus and Antoninus, and finding himself – for the time being – the master of the world. Not even the most sanguine of optimists could have expected it to last for long.

Morbid sensitiveness was not a distinguishing mark of the Roman soldier; but even the frontier legions were conscious of a distinct shock to their finer feelings when they heard of the proceedings at Rome. Besides, it was extremely questionable whether the Prætorians had the right to divide among themselves the bonus paid on the accession of a new emperor. It did not escape the notice of the army chiefs that the senate had done an extraordinarily foolish thing in re-opening in so clumsy a way the whole question of the relation between the senate and the principate. The scandalous election of Julianus now gave them an excellent opening for interference. The Pannonian legions were set in motion. It was impossible for the Prætorian

Guard to contend with the legions. Their pretensions ignominiously collapsed. Surrounded on parade by the armed ranks of the Pannonians, they sullenly surrendered, and were dissolved. Julianus was executed. The senate, helplessly looking on, found itself confronting a personality far more formidable than the handsome Commodus or the foolish Julianus – the governor of Pannonia, Lucius Septimius Severus.

For so long now they had been accustomed to a succession of good-natured gentlemen, who merely smiled and suffered fools with a reasonable amount of gladness, that they sat fascinated before this new man as rabbits before a python. He was an African by birth; he spoke with a strong African – that is to say, Phœnician – accent; a little, swarthy, perky, bright-eyed man¹ with a distinct curl to his hair, and with some of that intense vitality and activity which seems to belong to the dry zones and the desert-bred races – very rapid in all his thoughts and changes and stops and starts, and no more taking quite seriously everything he said than the actor who plays Othello. Septimius was florid in his promises. He took the oath which Traian and Hadrian – but not the truthful Marcus – had taken, never to pass sentence of death upon a senator. He came as the Avenger of Pertinax. He would have no truck with spies and informers. Marcus should be his model. He would be the kind of princeps they liked. Even as the firm and decided words snapped from his lips it is probable that his hearers, with sinking hearts, realized that they were only to be accepted with ninety per cent. deduction.

Septimius had taken full advantage of the proximity of Pannonia to Rome. He had got to Rome first: and possession is nine points of the law. Now it was time to consider his dear friends and (until lately) colleagues, Decimus Clodius Albinus, the governor of Britain, and Gaius Pescennius Niger, the governor of Syria.

The peculiarities of Pertinax, which make it fair to rank him in the same human *genus* as Mr. Pecksniff, were pale and feeble beside the deeper colour and more robust strength of the same characteristics in Septimius Severus. Septimius wept over the virtues of his predecessor, and appropriated his opinions. He too would worship at the shrine of the senate. He would

¹ See his portrait, facing p. 474: a very unusual face.

virtuously put aside his own sons and would follow this superior plan of co-opting some noble fellow who was distinguished by merit alone. . . . This gave him the opportunity of offering the title of Cæsar, and the succession to the empire, to Clodius Albinus. Clodius possessed several remarkable merits. To begin with, he disposed of only four or five legions, against the nine of Niger. It was therefore safe to leave him to the last. He possessed also the virtue of credulity. Septimius must have smiled in the privacy of his heart when the news reached him that Albinus had taken the bait. All was well. Less than five weeks after he had arrived in Rome, Septimius was off again, bound for the east.

Niger had already acted. He had sent forward an advance guard which had seized Byzantium. Septimius threw in a force which invested Byzantium and pinned the Syrians there. As soon as he himself arrived, he left Byzantium behind him and hurried across the straits. Niger – an honest and clever man, but one who never fussed – was late, and Septimius confronted him at Cyzicus on the Asiatic side. At Cyzicus a battle was fought, ending with the retreat of the Syrians. Septimius, after some manœuvring, caught them again near Nicæa, and inflicted a severe reverse upon them. The Syrians now fell right back upon their base. Pressing on, Septimius cleverly forced the Cilician gates and advanced upon Antioch. Niger collected all the resources he could command, and blocked the way at Issus, the famous battle-ground of Alexander and Darius. Here the decisive struggle was fought out. A storm beating in the face of the Syrians turned the day against them: they were routed and dispersed in all directions. Niger was caught in trying to cross the Euphrates, and was killed.

V

Septimius was decisive in all that he did. He severely punished the cities that had supported Niger: he highly rewarded those that had taken his own side. After a winter spent in settling Syria he crossed the Euphrates and spent eighteen months in attending to the Mesopotamian frontier. At last Byzantium, after holding out to the last possible moment under its Greek engineer, fell, and Septimius was ready to return westwards. He marked the change by a sudden abandonment

of the principles of Pertinax. His eldest son, Caracallus, was created Cæsar, and heir designate to the empire. Marching back by the Danube, he left his army to take up its station at Vindonissa, on the edge of Gaul, and himself paid a visit to Rome.

There were public protests – not by senators themselves, but by their hired crowds. Septimius was not at all troubled by this. He placed before the senate a resolution condemning Clodius Albinus as a public enemy. The *patres* passed it, and armed with this justification, Septimius returned to Gaul. Albinus, now aware of the true state of the case, assembled his armies at Lyons. There, on the nineteenth of February, in the year 197, was fought a great battle. The British legions broke the Illyrians, and for a time the whole cause of Severus trembled in the balance. Septimius rallied his men by his personal appeal and his inspiring vitality; the scale turned in his favour, and the rout of the British legions was followed by the suicide of Albinus. Lyons was sacked and burnt. The whole empire was completely in the hands of Septimius Severus.

The fierce little man now threw off the mask. Promptly upon his return to Rome he faced the senate. He no longer talked of taking Marcus as his model. With emphasis and with downrightness he reminded them how futile and how useless had been the endless patience and the perpetual conciliatoriness of Pompeius and Julius. Better by far the firmness, logic and consistency of Sulla and Marius, who did not try to shut their eyes to facts, but sought to obtain clear and decisive results. Commodus (said Septimius) was a better man than some of his present hearers. He knew that most of the senate were traitors and had secretly sympathized with Niger and Clodius – and now he had documentary evidence to prove it.

Sixty-four senators were tried for treason. Thirty-five were acquitted: twenty-nine were condemned and executed. At the emperor's instance Commodus was formally deified – a slap in the face for the senate which no doubt it enjoyed – and the appointment of Caracallus as Cæsar and heir to the empire was ratified. The senate had conspired against Commodus. This was the result. All that it had gained by its action was swept away, and in place of the constitutional monarchs who had treated the senate with consistent respect, kindness and

thoughtfulness, stood a severe master – a man with the uncomfortable habit of decisiveness.

VI

Five years passed before Severus returned to Rome. During that time he had been fighting his Parthian campaign, capturing Ctesiphon, and inspecting the eastern provinces. He was one of the greatest of Roman administrators – a man with a genius for perceiving the signs of the times, and the demand of circumstances. What he thought was required, that, with unflinching firmness, he immediately did. The dissolution of the long period of harmony and co-operation between the senate and the principate meant that new policies must everywhere be initiated, and new decisions made. Into the details of all these changes it is not here possible to go: but there are one or two of the more striking features of his reign which may be remarked upon.

The dissolution of the coalition meant that the principate fell back upon the support of the provinces. The compromise of Augustus had sought to preserve the central nucleus of the Roman state – that firmly knit core of Romans in which dwelt the spirit and tradition of Rome. The alliance of senate and principate implied that the imperial government would try to take the senate into association in the task of organizing and governing the world. But the senate would not go. It would not face facts or solve problems; it would only ignore the one and turn aside from the other. With the reign of Septimius, the imperial government ceases to make the effort, and begins in earnest the task of ruling without the senate.

The principate, therefore, under Septimius, begins to reflect more and more the public opinion, the interests, the character of the provinces: he was himself an African: his wife was a Syrian: the men who were his chief helpers often betray, by their names, their provincial origin: their spirit was cosmopolitan rather than Roman. The very word 'Roman' was beginning to imply something other than a quality derived from the place called Rome. It meant now an abstract conception, an indefinable suggestion of universality, which would considerably have astonished Camillus or Cato.

The Roman quality of Camillus and Cato had blazed up

almost for the last time in Marcus Aurelius. It had dwindled now to an 'ism': it was 'Stoicism.' It was dying and disappearing. It now had to be learnt out of books. Some new basis was needed as a foundation for the spirit of the new era. Stoicism did not seem to be either sufficiently convincing or sufficiently inviting for the purpose. The empress Julia Domna had as much influence as any one in rendering Asiatic religious ideas fashionable in imperial circles. The idea of a unity which comprehended the world as one state, all men as one brotherhood, all things as one creation, everything as one – this was present in the Asiatic creeds, and it was what the empire wanted. The reign of Septimius therefore saw a revulsion not only from the political principles of the senate, but also from its religious ideas. The parting of senate and principate was a radical break, a divergence of principle.

When Septimius Severus died at York, during his British campaign, the sons of Julia Domna succeeded him. Caracallus was almost the first emperor of his kind – a fierce military man, utterly deaf to the appeal of the merely traditional. His murder of his brother Geta, like his extension of Roman citizenship to all free members of the empire, were both of them signs of that passion for unity which could not endure to see divisions and distinctions. It was an inchoate and irrational passion. The decisiveness of the Severi at last over-reached itself. Caracallus frightened his own prætorian prefect, Macrinus; and before the emperor had either a co-opted or a natural heir, he was stabbed and killed by a man of Macrinus, and the empire was left without a successor who could take his place.

The unexpected death of Caracallus at the age of twenty-nine was a catastrophe of the first importance. By throwing open the succession it created the possibility of civil war, and it invited the crude and imperfect solution of the sword for a problem which needed great consideration and deep study. Here, however, a woman stepped in. The empress Julia was the daughter of Bassianus, the hereditary high-priest of the Sun cult of Elagabal at Emesa. As her sons had succeeded to the empire, the succession to the priesthood of Elagabal had passed through her sister, Julia Mæsa, to the son of the latter's daughter Scemias. The boy was thirteen years old when Caracallus was killed

There were troops at Emesa, who knew and admired the handsome young high-priest. His likeness to Caracallus was noticeable. The stake at issue was too big for hesitation. Julia Mæsa put the boy forward as a natural son of Caracallus. The funds of the Temple of the Sun did the rest. Such a claim, with vast resources of money behind it, was irresistible. Five weeks after the death of Caracallus, young Bassianus was proclaimed emperor, and accepted by the troops at Emesa. More than this, the treasure of the temple had done its work in every province of the east. Everywhere, young Bassianus was regarded with sympathy and approval. Macrinus found himself isolated. Forced to hazard a battle, he was defeated at Immæ, and Bassianus was acknowledged by the army. From this it was but a step to acceptance by the senate – and with that, the young high-priest was ruler of the Roman empire.

VII

M. Aurelius Antoninus was the official name of young Bassianus – but he is usually known to us by his priestly name of ‘Elagabalus.’ He began by being a great success as a spectacle. The Roman public was delighted with the novelty of oriental pomp and Syrian religion. It was something new – and some of it was highly improper. But as the novelty wore off, the Roman public grew less enthusiastic. Elagabalus took himself too seriously. He really believed in his god Elagabal – which was where he and Rome distinctly parted company. He really had ideas; and that was a mistake, for when a Roman wanted ideas, he did not usually go to Syria for them.

The object of Elagabalus and his advisers was the religious unification of the empire under the ægis of the god Elagabal. This set at least two powerful sections of public opinion against him. One party did not wish for the religious unification of the empire, and infinitely preferred the quaint old gods and goddesses of their forefathers. Another party was ready for religious unification – but not under the ægis of the Syrian god. Elagabalus – or rather his advisers – succeeded in thoroughly offending both these parties. When Elagabalus, representing his god, solemnly married a vestal virgin, the old-fashioned Roman quite failed to realize the delicate symbolism intended.

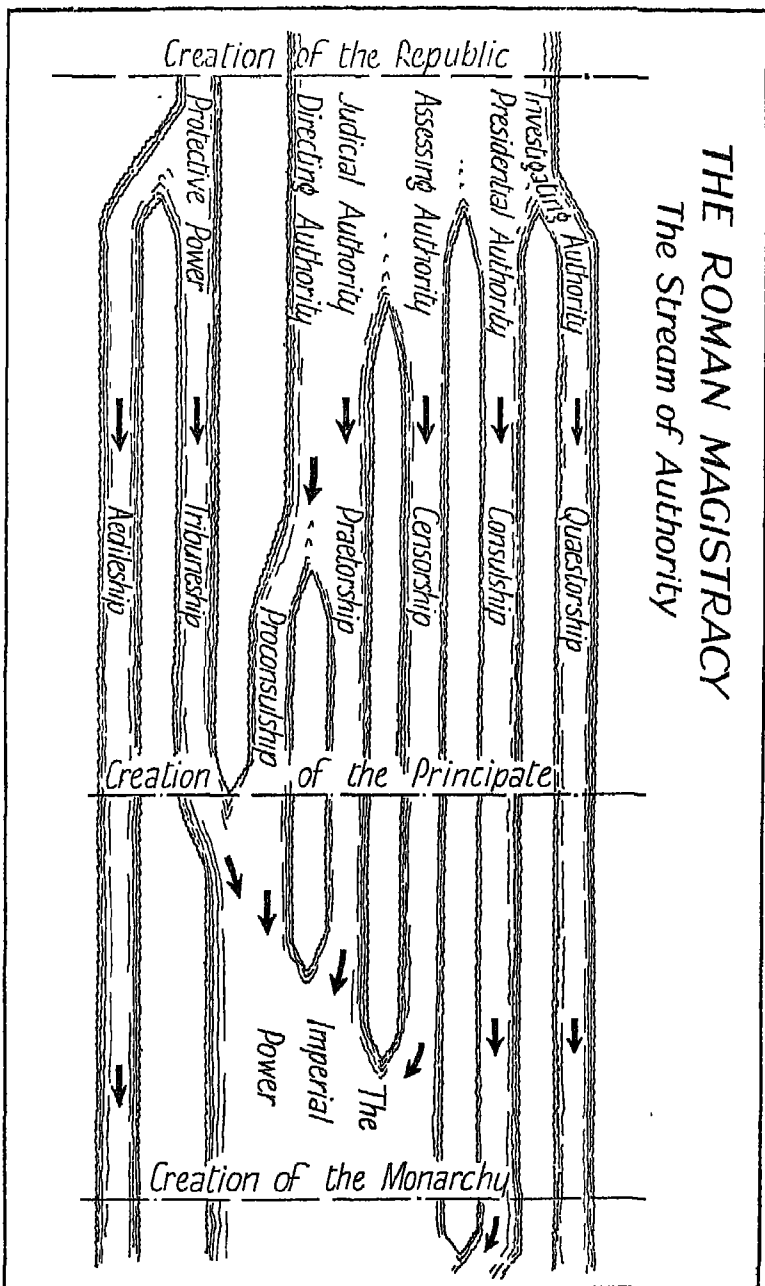
He saw nothing to be enthusiastic over when ancient and sacred Roman relics were taken from their immemorial shrines and collected in a sort of pantheon where Elagabal presided. Who, after all, was Elagabal? The public, while willing to accept the moral views of Elagabalus as a scandalous sensation, declined them as a serious religion.

Julia Mæsa was clever enough to see that her grandson had taken the wrong road. She began to put forward her second grandson, Mamæa's son Alexander, as a partner to share his honours. The jealousy of Elagabalus recoiled on his own head and brought about his death at the hands of the Prætorians. Alexander thus became sole emperor. Like his cousin, Alexander was a mere figure-head, the representative of forces which were careful to keep in the background. He was brought up to avoid all those oriental exuberances which had offended Rome. His moral training was severe, and he was taught a religion which regarded all divine beings as spiritually identical and as aspects of one universal truth, and all men who had contributed to the progress and elevation of mankind as equally admirable and equally deserving of worship. Elagabalus had lasted only four years. Alexander had a much greater success. For fifteen years he reigned over the Roman world; and there seemed no reason why he should not continue indefinitely. The Syrian trust which was now in possession of the empire seemed to have produced an article that exactly met the Roman taste.

But there was a fault in the calculation. To meet the taste of Rome was not enough. The military necessities of the northern frontiers, urgent at least from the days of Marcus, also needed to be met; and for this Alexander had not been prepared. Ever since the plague swept over the empire there had been some fall in productivity and some consequent decline in wealth. The troubles of the senate were not purely spiritual. A large part of its efforts to resist the imperial policy had been due to the growing pressure of taxation. The senatorial landlords demanded peace and economy; the military chiefs as firmly insisted upon adequate protection and a sufficient army. The senate could not understand the necessity upon which the army insisted. The result was a series of strains and stresses which at last reached the breaking point.

THE ROMAN MAGISTRACY

The Stream of Authority



The assassination of young Alexander by the Rhineland troops at Mainz brought to an end the rule of the Syrian trust, and terminated the attempt to unify the empire on the lines it had adopted. The deed seemed a wanton act of barbarity to those who appreciated the gentleness of Alexander's character. The instigators of the crime were unable to explain themselves, and in any case had no chance of a hearing. Senatorial tradition left behind it a hideous portrait of the ogre Maximin. The reason is simple. The new emperor planned a complete subjection of Germany, and the completion of the Elbe frontier projected by Marcus. For this purpose he had no hesitation in seizing the resources of the wealthy temples and rich municipalities of the Roman world, and in repressing with an iron hand the resistance of those who did not understand the necessity of the plans he proposed. Had he achieved success, the disasters of the next thirty years might have been avoided. But Maximin had no chance of carrying out his plans. Two years after his accession, a senatorial revolt in Africa led to the elevation of the Gordians, father and son. Maximin at once set out for Rome. Within a month, however, the garrison of Africa, without assistance, had overthrown the Gordians and slain them. A young boy, grandson of the elder Gordian, survived with vague claims to the empire. The senate immediately nominated two magistrates, emperors in name, consuls in spirit, and prepared to resist the dictation of the army. Whether there was any serious hope of success may be questionable, but the issue was never joined. Maximin himself was murdered at Aquileia: and for the moment the control of the situation was in the hands of the senate. So helpless was the army after the death of Maximin, and so lacking in any central direction, that the struggle seemed decided. But the senate had no plan, and no policy. The two senatorial nominees also were murdered by the disgusted troops, leaving the young Gordian the sole emperor, if emperor he could be called, whose personality, powers, claims and rights were all alike shadowy.

This situation dragged on. For six years the boy Gordian survived through the abilities of his minister Timesitheus. The death of Timesitheus meant the fall of Gordian III and another struggle. Philip, an Arabian, lasted five years.

Philip was overthrown by Decius, who lasted two years. Decius fell in battle, and Gallus succeeded. At the end of two years Gallus was killed by Æmilianus. At this point a halt was called. Valerian, who now became emperor, represented a compromise. It was high time.

We need not doubt the reality of the pressure which compelled the great landlords to hold out against the demands of the army: and it is impossible to doubt the reality of the pressure by which the army was driven. The whole population of Europe, as far as it was known to the Romans, seemed to be on the move against the frontiers of the Roman empire. Twice in the reign of Philip and then in that of Decius the frontier was overwhelmed by invaders from eastern Europe. The ruling tribes of the Goths (themselves, by their own account, old immigrants from Sweden), who controlled the rich agricultural districts of the Vistula valley, were evidently feeling the pressure of population, and were entering upon a policy of aggression against their neighbours in every direction. The emperor Decius was killed in battle by the Goths, and Illyria was devastated. The damage done by the Gothic invasions was immense, and it cannot have failed to add to the financial embarrassments of the government. These invasions were new and alarming facts, to which no parallel was offered by any previous episodes in the history of Rome. Not even the appearance of the Cimbri and Teutones was so serious a menace as the invasions of the Goths.

The contest between the senate and the army had by this time plunged the empire into irrevocable disaster. It was too late now to try to prevent the mischief; but it was still possible to struggle with the consequences. Valerian had the confidence of both parties. He associated with himself his son Gallienus, and together the two prepared to face the impending troubles.

VIII

Early in the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus the turmoil in central Europe rose to a crisis. The Goths, expanding eastward as well as westward, reached the shores of the Black Sea, and began to explore it. Raids upon the coasts of Asia Minor were the prelude to the discovery of the straits, and the revelation that they were almost undefended. Centuries

of peace under the protection of Rome had seen the ancient fortifications of the Greek cities moulder gently into desuetude, and had persuaded the inhabitants that the necessity for such protection had passed away for ever. They were soon to find out their appalling mistake.

Dacia was overrun by the Goths, and vanished from the list of Roman provinces. The year after this, the Rhine frontier was broken through by a great army of Franks, who spread over the prosperous land of Gaul. The result of this catastrophe was that Gaul refused any longer to receive directions from Rome, and elected an able officer, M. Cassianus Latinus Postumus, who succeeded in re-closing the frontier and driving the Franks into Spain. Here they committed great destruction until driven into Africa, where they finally dispersed. In the meantime, the Alamanni of the Upper Danube attempted to imitate their neighbours of the Rhine, but were repulsed by Gallienus. The plot now thickened. News came that the Persians were threatening Mesopotamia. The eastern realm had already carried out that renovation of its government which was so necessary, but seemed so remote, in the Roman empire. The old Parthian monarchy had been overthrown, and a new and vigorous dynasty, the Sassanian, had taken its place. This meant not only that the days were over when Roman armies could march to Ctesiphon at their own sweet will, but that Rome was on the defensive. News that the Persians were at Antioch caused Valerian to turn over Italian affairs to Gallienus, and hurry to the east. He reached Byzantium just about the time when Gaul was abandoning its Roman allegiance, and when Illyria was imitating her by electing Ingenuus. It was necessary to prevent the Persians and the Goths from joining hands. Valerian fought a battle and won a victory at Edessa in Mesopotamia just about the time when a great invasion of Alamanni drove Gallienus before it into Italy. The invaders reached the neighbourhood of Rome before Gallienus could reorganize and drive them back. Some parties reached southern Gaul. A battle near Milan cleared Italy. Gallienus was more fortunate than his father. A series of blunders and follies handed over Valerian to the foe. Rome was shocked to hear that he had been captured by the Persians, who had sacked Antioch and Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and only turned back because of

PLATE VIII



[*Imperator Cæsar*]
M COMMODVS
Antoninus
Augustus



Imperator Cæsar
L SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS
Pertinax
Augustus



Imperator Cæsar M Aurelius CLAUDIUS
Augustus GOTHICUS



Imperator Cæsar G. Aurelius
Valerius DIOCLETIANUS
Augustus



Imperator Cæsar FLAVIUS
Valerius CONSTANTINUS
Augustus

(From Coins in the British Museum)

the lateness of the year. The unlucky Valerian was carried prisoner into Persia.

IX

An impartial observer might have been forgiven for thinking at this point that the Roman empire was at an end. With riots and prolonged disorder in Sicily, civil war in Alexandria and rebellion in Isauria, as well as prodigies, famine and pestilence everywhere, nothing but Italy and part of Africa was left to Gallienus. The Goths were pouring through the straits. Chalcedon, Nicomedia, Nicæa, Prusa and Apamea were sacked; Greece was overrun – and Greece was still a treasure-house of civilization. The devastation of Greece by crowds of rough tribesmen involved widespread destruction of libraries and works of art such as hardly existed anywhere else in the world. Gallienus sent help and orders that the fortifications of the cities should be repaired – but his treasury was bankrupt, and he himself had none too much authority. The invaders slowly disappeared, leaving a ruined land behind them.

Gallienus was one of the very few men who kept their heads in the emergency. He refused to be rushed by clamour, or frightened by odds. His contemporaries thought it hard-hearted when, on hearing of the capture of his father, he remarked: 'I knew he was mortal; and since he did all a brave man could, there is no more to be said.' He cared nothing for their opinion. He held his ground in the teeth of foreign foes and domestic enemies. He was a clever and perhaps an eccentric man. The hatred which pursued his name is probably due largely to the relentless determination with which he wrung from the Italian landowners the means to fight his wars and to recover the provinces. Nearly everything had collapsed around Gallienus. One thing remained: the imperial organization, the army which Julius had founded. From this he began to rebuild the power and authority of Rome. His measures were stern; but he troubled about no man's feelings.

He was killed at Milan in the fifteenth year of his reign. Before he died he appointed Marcus Aurelius Claudius his successor, and ordered the imperial regalia to be carried to him. It remained to be seen whether he was bequeathing anything more than a bankrupt estate.

BOOK V

THE MONARCHY

CHAPTER XXII

THE ILLYRIANS AND THE BOARD OF EMPIRE

(A.D. 268 – A.D. 314)

I

The new emperor was a man from the Danube provinces, and with his advent begins the rise of the Illyrians. It was like the sudden re-entry of the Romans of the earlier republic. In their roughness, their lack of culture, and their intensely strong character, the Illyrian emperors recall such men as Fabricius, Marius Curius, and Gaius Marius: and the likeness of mind and quality reflects a likeness of origin. Both types sprang from a class of yeoman farmers who gained, from a stern struggle with the earth, some of the inflexible endurance and unfailing promptitude which they showed in their dealings with their fellow men.

Claudius was called upon at once to deal with two great invasions which, if they had both occurred at the same time, would in all probability have been too much for the surviving strength of the empire. An immense host of Alamanni, strengthened with Goths, concentrated north of the Alps and invaded Italy by the Brenner Pass. Claudius waited for them above Verona. As soon as this threat was disposed of, he was called upon to meet an even more serious menace. A host of Goths, reputed to number over three hundred thousand, set out from the mouth of the Dniester, passed the straits, and entered the *Ægean*. Their attack on Thessalonica was unsuccessful, and when the news became known that Claudius was on the march from Italy, the Goths raised the siege, struck camp from Thessalonica, and moved north by the great road to the Danube. At

Naissus the new emperor's speed and promptitude intercepted them and brought them to battle. He all but suffered the fate of Decius. Only the intervention of a special reserve which he had prepared against eventualities, enabled him to avoid a disastrous defeat. Great numbers of the Goths fell into his hands as prisoners. The remainder he forced eastward into the mountains and blockaded there. By the next spring starvation and disease had reduced them to a small remnant. But these terrible allies that fought for Rome damaged even those they saved. Before the new year was old, Claudius himself died of the pestilence that ravaged Illyria.

Short as his reign had been, Claudius had done his work. His character and personality were more important than his actions. The brilliant, if eccentric ability of Gallicus had enabled him to perceive and to appreciate the strong steady mind of Claudius. The strength of Claudius enabled him to appreciate the extraordinary qualities of Aurelian, and to see that these were the qualities needed by the circumstances of the day. He had – perhaps prudently – made no public choice of a successor. On his death-bed he recommended Aurelian.

Aurelian – a man of very humble origin, a 'ranker,' and the son of a small farmer of Sirmium – took over control from the stiffening fingers of Claudius. He had just the same type of character that made the fame of Gaius Marius; an abounding determination that knew no halt and no swerving; an acute sense of justice, a passion for punctuality, promptitude and smartness on parade. Slovenliness and disorder of any and every kind were hateful in the eyes of Aurelian, and invited his instant and hostile attention. He immediately made a peace on moderate terms with the Goths in Illyria. They were glad enough to make it, and it set him free to attend to more important problems.

His first task was to clear Italy of the Alamanni and their various allies. This he did with vigour and success. Their raiding parties had penetrated as far south as the Metaurus, and Rome herself had been threatened. Aurelian took the bold step of altogether re-fortifying the ancient city. For centuries the suburbs had been expanding beyond the so-called 'Servian' wall. A new wall was now built to protect these undefended suburbs. By the end of the year Aurelian had Italy and Illyria clear.

What had happened to the empire was not vigorous and determined rebellion of its separate parts, nor effective occupation by the northern tribesmen, but a mere dissolution of its organization under the strain of war and confusion. The only serious question in the east was the kingdom of Palmyra. Odenathus and his queen Zenobia – typical priest-monarchs of an old-world temple-state – had been loyal to Rome during the days of confusion, and had done much to prevent the secession of the eastern provinces. Odenathus was now dead, and his son Wahballath was governing Egypt in the name of Rome.

Aurelian up to this point owed nothing but thanks to the royal family of Palmyra; but the suggestion that he might resume the old authority of the empire seems to have disturbed Wahballath. The latter took the title of Augustus and issued coins without the head of Aurelian. This was enough for Aurelian. He instantly despatched one of his best officers to Alexandria, and himself, with his army, set out on the long march to the east. Probus, his representative, re-asserted the imperial authority in Alexandria. The advent of Aurelian in Asia instantly restored the prestige of the empire and set going the clogged wheels of the administrative machine. No resistance was offered until the emperor approached Palmyra. At Antioch he defeated the forces of Zenobia, and pressing on, routed them in a battle near Emesa. After successfully defending Palmyra for some time, Zenobia recognized that she could not permanently resist the vast resources of the empire. She fled, was caught; Palmyra surrendered; and although Aurelian spared her life, her responsible advisers were most of them executed. Aurelian spent a year in the east. He had already set out on his return to Europe when he heard that Palmyra had again revolted. He turned back, sacked and destroyed the city, and obliterated the old priest-state. This settled the matter. The eastern provinces were once more obedient members of the empire.

As soon as he returned to Italy he proceeded to attend to Gaul, which had been independent ever since the revolt of Postumus sixteen years before. Tetricus, the last successor of Postumus, was willing to make a bargain; and Gaul, also, with its appanages, Spain and Britain, passed back into possession of the emperor. In less than four years he had re-assembled the

provinces that once seemed hopelessly lost, had restored the administration of the central government, had re-fortified Rome and had re-defined the frontiers.

The rapidity of Aurelian's actions was not the only remarkable feature of his work. He had evidently thought more deeply than most of his predecessors. Among the problems he was prepared to tackle was the question of finance. For many years now the financial organization of the empire had come to a stop. War and devastation had swept again and again over all the provinces, and even over Italy; destruction had been universal, capital had disappeared, and the means of conducting commerce had largely vanished. The coinage had been debased to the last extremity. The mere suggestion of a reform of the coinage caused a revolt among the interested persons who had profited by its debasement. Among these, apparently, were some senators: and the severity and impartiality of the punishment he meted out made Aurelian as hated a man among these last survivors of the oligarchy as Tiberius or Domitian had been among the senators of an earlier age. His reforms were never carried out. On his way to the east, to examine the Persian frontier, he threatened one of his secretaries with punishment. He paid the penalty of a reputation for excessive severity. The man hastily forged a death-warrant for some of Aurelian's trusted officers, and palmed it off upon them as genuine. Before the fraud was discovered, Aurelian had been murdered by the alarmed officers – and the reign of a very remarkable man abruptly ended.

II

Aurelian had made no provision for a successor. This was now not quite so serious a matter as once it might have been. He had thrown the machine of government back into gear, and it was beginning to run of itself. The senate elected a harmless nonentity named Tacitus, who lasted a few months and died; after which the re-disciplined army asked Probus, the friend and deputy of Aurelian, to accept the empire. Probus was willing, and arranged matters with the senate.

Probus was a quiet, unobtrusive man who carried on the work of Aurelian with success, and who was careful to make no more enemies than he could help. For eight years he continued

the task of inspecting, revising and securing the frontiers of the empire, and of establishing order where it was necessary. He was a soldier, and he made no pretence to profound statesmanship. But his reign had an importance of its own.

Aurelian, like Camillus, had been a man with a strong religious sense and a definite religious philosophy. He had seen the wave of war and devastation break over the empire, and unity, organization and even the sense of fellowship vanish in the turmoil. Like Julia Mæsa and her Syrian friends—indeed, like every one else in these days—he had been impressed with the necessity of a spiritual unity, a unity of thought and outlook and will, a like-mindedness among men, if the empire were to be preserved. The unity achieved so far had been of an unsatisfactory kind. The real likeness of will and idea achieved by the oligarchy had been confined to a small circle of men, and was only of value to the world at large if that small circle continued to fulfil the function of a link uniting the many varieties of human being who lived within the bounds of the empire. But (as we have seen) the oligarchy had long ceased to do anything of the kind. It had degenerated more and more into a clique of local Roman families, who were of no interest to the rest of the world. Unity must be found by some other means. The obvious means, as the Syrians had perceived, was a religion. But the religions put forward by Elagabalus and Alexander were not what the world wanted. Aurelian was a soldier, and no doubt a Mithraist. It is difficult to say precisely what he did; but to all appearance he founded a branch of the Mithraist brotherhood, a society of worshippers of the Unconquered Sun. During his short reign he built a magnificent temple in Rome, as the headquarters of the new cult: a temple of Sol Invictus. The symbol of the sun appears upon his coins as the lord of the Roman empire.

But Aurelian's religion was not a cosmogony, nor an essay in metaphysics. Its significance lay in what it could justify and what it could command. Like Camillus, he saw religion as a social and a political bond. The worship of the sun was a worship of that centre whence radiates the light that gives understanding and the warmth that gives life: it implied a belief in an eternal and infinite source: it implied a strong conviction that power and rights did not grow up from below, but

descended from above. Hitherto, the conception of the People, the citizen assembly, as the sovereign, and of the magistrate as holding a delegated authority, had been the only one recognized by the Roman. But from the reign of Aurelian onward a new conception arose and rapidly grew: the idea that the monarch is the sovereign, and that all the rights of the citizen are acquired by his gift. Aurelian himself is alleged to have said that the purple was the gift of God, who alone gave it and took it away. The sting of this assertion lay in the deduction that therefore neither the army nor the senate could give it or withdraw it: and in view of the recent history of the empire this was a highly important contention.

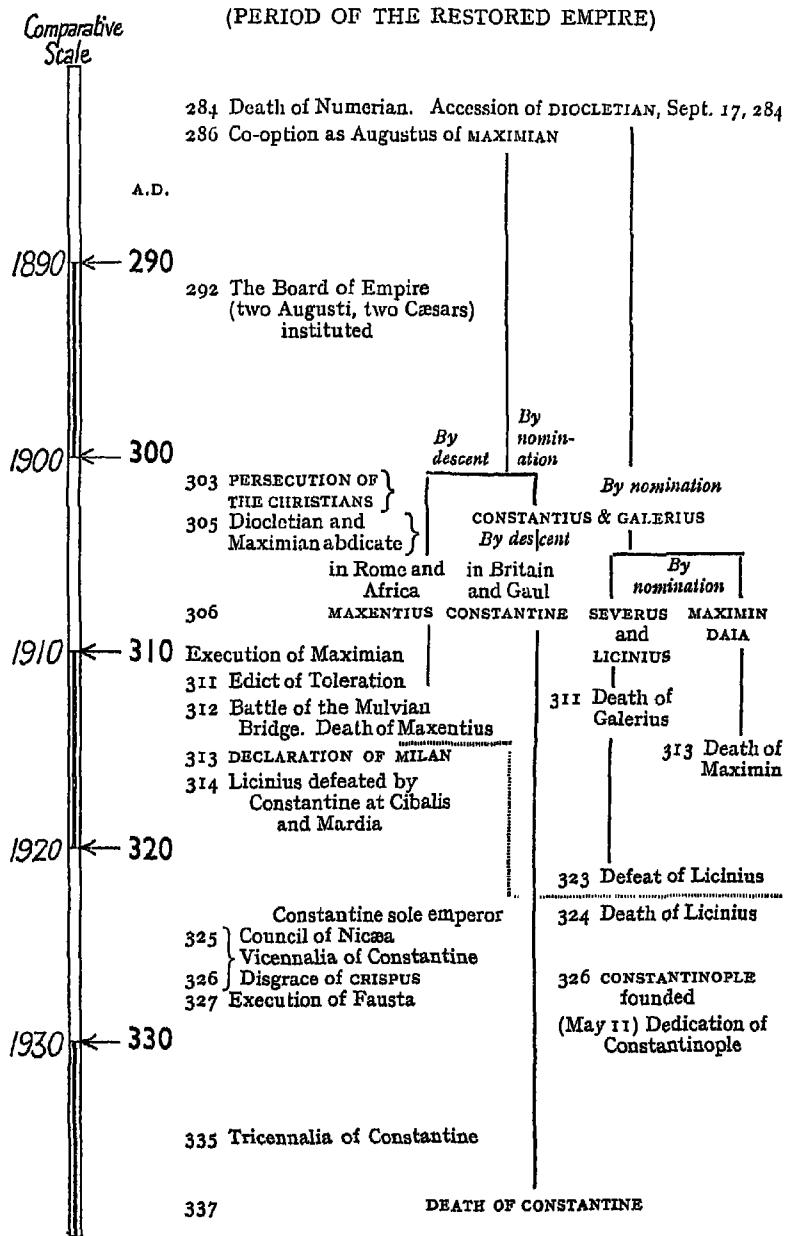
All the men who were to decide the fate of the Roman empire during the next fifty years were educated and inspired by this new order of *Sol Invictus*. The importance of Probus, Aurelian's friend, was that he continued the tradition after the death of Aurelian, and steadily and consistently filled all the important posts of the army with men imbued with the new ideas. When Probus was killed in a mutiny, Carus stepped into his shoes. Carus hardly troubled about the approval of the senate. He was emperor by the grace of God. It was a revolutionary thought, which hitherto the Roman had not dared to entertain. But Carus was a stop-gap. He showed some signs of wishing to appoint his own sons to succeed him: and these sons were not distinguished by brains. Stronger and abler men than he were waiting impatiently for an opportunity to put forward ideas which had scarcely troubled any one's head until now. . . . The circumstances under which Carus died contain much that is suspicious, and much that is incredible: but over his body stepped a man who was to be one of the greatest of Roman statesmen – Diocletian.

III

Like Aurelian, and like Claudius II, Diocletian was a man of very humble birth. Scandal, indeed, said that his parents had been slaves, and that he was the son of a freedman: a whisper which implies the same kind of disparagement – or praise – which would be conveyed by the assertion that some famous modern statesman had been born in the poorhouse.

SEVENTH CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(PERIOD OF THE RESTORED EMPIRE)



He was by no means a highly educated man¹; but it would be easy to exaggerate his shortcomings in this respect. His father had been the household secretary to a rich senatorial family. Diocletian himself was too much a man of ideas to have been ignorant of books. He had read – perhaps not deeply, and possibly not widely, but certainly with intelligence and with a wish to apply to practical life the principles he found.

If his portraits are any guide, Diocletian was a stocky, heavily-built man, with a slight tendency to fleshiness, and somewhat stiff and muscle-bound in his movements. A slight puckering of the brow, as of habitual thought, is a characteristic feature of his portraits. It is not an intellectual face, but it does strongly suggest what seems on other grounds to be the truth about his character: a mind not perfectly trained, and therefore never concluded and closed, but always disposed to go on seeking for what it was not perfectly fitted to find – set in a frame of iron strength, which controlled most of his instincts and reactions.

Diocletian was a conscious and deliberate return to the Antonine model. He wanted to reintroduce some of that splendid good temper, that noble repose and friendliness, of which Antoninus Pius had been the grandest exponent: and, at any rate, to get rid of the incessant unrest, dissension, rebellion, disobedience, which had almost destroyed the empire. That much of this rebellion had been justifiable did not alter its mischievous effect. Some of the repose of Antoninus had been due to a refined scepticism which did not allow him to believe too strongly in anything. Diocletian replaced this scepticism by a large, simple – perhaps crude – article of faith from the doctrines of Sol Invictus; that all good was from above, and that we should each obey the beneficent power above us. To look up – up to the fount of life and light and warmth – this was the simple evangel of Diocletian.

He did not propose to stop at generalities. He was anxious to interpret in detail the new gospel, and to apply it to the daily life of men.

¹ Professor F. F. Abbott, in his entertaining version of Diocletian's Tariff of Maximum Prices (*The Common People of Ancient Rome*, Ch. V), suggests that the rather wild and whirling preamble to the edict may have been Diocletian's own composition.

Imagination, which seems so easy, is in fact the rarest of all gifts. Most men spend their days in imitating one another. Diocletian himself had no dazzling new conceptions: he merely enlarged and re-arranged the principles which had been slowly, for generations past, evolving themselves in the methods of the empire. Long discussions behind the scenes must have preceded the reforms which Diocletian began to introduce into the administration, and even into the organization of the empire. They were not the fruit of solitary meditation. The experience, and even the suffering, of the provincials were reflected in these plans of reform.

IV

His first step was to associate with himself as an equal partner in the empire, his friend Maximian. In doing this he merely took up the plan adopted by Antoninus Pius when the latter made Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus joint emperors. The new Augusti were modelled upon the old example: Diocletian, like Marcus, was to be the man of ideas; Maximian, like Verus, the man of action. While Diocletian took up the work of reorganization, Maximian cleared Gaul of invaders and rebels and pacified the country. Britain was lost through the revolt of Carausius, and its reconquest had to be postponed for the present.

Experience seemed to show that the way in which the empire, under stress of invasion, had fallen apart into separate areas, each with a local government of its own, corresponded to some reality which it might be wise to take into account. There could be no doubt of the tendency of Gaul, with Britain and sometimes Spain, to count as a unit: Illyria similarly had a way of becoming a separate area: while the Asiatic provinces unmistakably formed a group with a distinct character and a history unlike that of any other. Four distinct divisions of the empire had to be considered. Diocletian recognized these facts by developing the plan, first devised under Hadrian, by which an inferior or associate emperor known as a Cæsar was attached to the superior office of the Augustus, as a present apprentice and a future heir. Diocletian himself adopted Galerius as his own assistant and successor, while Maximian adopted Constantius. Instead of the whole burden coming

upon one man's shoulders, it was divided among four. Another advantage marked the new system: there could never be an interregnum, and the succession could never fall into the hands of the senate or the army. The Augusti would co-opt the Cæsars, who would, in their turn, in due time become Augusti – so that a perpetual system of co-optation was created.

The next important change which Diocletian made was similarly the consummation of a development which had been in progress for at least a hundred years. Hadrian's reign had seen the toleration of the system of provincial recruitment for the army. Septimius Severus, by dissolving the old Prætorian Guard and reorganizing it, had created the nucleus of a new army which should be recruited freely from all sources, but should have no local associations. Gallienus had fought his defensive wars with an army which was really a development of this nucleus. Claudius and Aurelian inherited from him the mobile force which followed them all over the empire, fighting where and when required. Diocletian recast this system, and created two definite types of military force: a defensive army for the frontiers, intended as a permanent watch and patrol, and a Striking Force intended to operate at need against any objective. This latter army was an organization very different from the army of Marius and Julius. Its members were no longer exclusively sons, or even stepsons of Italy; they were no longer men trained in municipal life. They came from all over the empire, and tribesmen from the borders were not disqualified from their ranks.

The new frontier army was completely separated from the civil administration of the provinces. When Gallienus excluded senators from military employment, he had not entirely excluded them from provincial governorships; so that the effect of the measure had been to create separate civil and military administrations.¹ This principle, taken over by Diocletian, was rapidly extended and universalized. The civil administration, no longer bound to conform to military requirements, was reshaped upon a new model. The old provinces at various times, as convenience dictated, were broken up into smaller units. These small provinces were grouped into 'Dioceses,'

¹ J. G. C. Anderson : *The Genesis of Diocletian's Provincial Reorganization*, in 'Papers dedicated to Sir George Macdonald, K.C.B.,' *J.R.S.*, XXII (1932).

under a 'vicarius' ; the dioceses were again (either now or later by Constantine) grouped into four great prefectures, governed by permanent officials who acted as administrative heads for the two Augusti and the two Cæsars. The product of these changes was a vast system of paid officials much more under the control of the men at the top than the old simple system under which almost illimitable power was placed in the hands of the provincial governors. The aim of all these changes was to prevent the perpetual revolt and disobedience which for fifty years had paralysed the power of the central government.

At the head of the new administrative machine stood the council of ministers. To the 'Friends of Cæsar' who advised Augustus, and the *Consilium* – a body of paid law-lords who counselled Hadrian – now succeeded a true council, composed of the heads of departments, the *Consistorium*. The heads of the Treasury, the Army and the legal administration, together with the Secretary of State or head of the civil staff, and the head of the imperial household, all met as a consultative body, by the general consensus of which (and not by the individual ministers) the emperor was advised. Nothing could be farther from the real facts than to imagine the monarch issuing imperious *fiats* at his own unbridled will. All his imperial actions were carefully thought over, and his formal acts prepared, by a department of trained officials, and they were approved by the consistory before issue. The final determination of policy was his; but it is probable that he only occasionally dealt with the details.

The departments controlled by the ministers were now very different things from the household of Cæsar as it once had been. The civil service established by Diocletian was such a service as we are to-day familiar with in the government of modern nations. Even the household had changed. A new formality hedged round the emperor. A historian who lived in the days of Diocletian and probably knew him personally has hazarded the statement that he was a timid man. Considering the history of the empire, he might be excused for looking carefully under his pillow, and attentively examining his cupboards, before retiring to rest. If he woke in the night, his first instinct would be to listen for the step of the guardsman in the corridor, and the breathing of the silent watcher who

stood near his bed. . . . Diocletian abolished the old easy ways and made it impossible to assassinate the emperor, or even to threaten or terrorize him, with the old facility. The new imperial household was disciplined like a military headquarters.

The whole underlying idea had begun to change. The emperor was no longer merely the holder of various offices delegated to him by the republic: he was not now merely the guide and protector of the state: he had become, in addition, the representative of the divine creative power of the universe – the Will, the Word, who said: ‘Let there be light!’ He was the human representative of the Unconquered Sun, who shed his beams upon the just and the unjust. To bow down to a magistrate may be unworthy of a free man: but to bow down to the representative of the creative power of the universe is another matter. And Diocletian made them bow. What the world would not take from Julius or Caligula or Domitian – still less from Elagabalus – it took from Diocletian, the evangelist of Sol Invictus.

V

The new organization seemed to work well. In every part of the empire, save Britain, the authority of the imperial government was firmly re-established and the reformed system was introduced. But the weak spot in Diocletian’s work was the complicated system of succession to the empire. It was almost immediately betrayed: and from that starting point the system was subjected to a number of surprising modifications.

One of the peculiarities of strong men is their fondness for opposite types. Old Maximian – a bold and bluff and somewhat bullying person, with infinite conviction of his own virtues – had chosen and adopted as his Cæsar a man of gentle and patient temperament whose kindness and consideration for others made him universally popular. No one ever discovered the real convictions of Constantius. He had one face for all men; and about his private religion he kept his counsel so well that to this day it remains a puzzle. Diocletian, on the other hand, had chosen a Cæsar who possessed a good many of the faults and some of the virtues of King Henry VIII. The writers who recorded his character for our benefit were in

most cases bitterly prejudiced against him; but they had reason. Galerius was a violent and tempestuous man who certainly did not suggest the Antonine emperors.

Constantius had succeeded to Maximian's work in Gaul while Maximian turned his attention to Africa. The Cæsar proved a successful man. His capture of Boulogne and his campaign into the Frankish netherlands prepared the way for the long postponed recovery of Britain. Galerius, on the other hand, had the maddening experience of a military reverse at the hands of the Persians. Diocletian, going to meet him, compelled him to walk on foot before the imperial carriage, as a sign of disgrace.

Although Galerius retrieved his reputation by a second and victorious campaign, Constantius had meanwhile carried out with complete and distinguished success the reconquest of Britain. This was something that a man of the type of Galerius found it difficult to endure. By his campaigns against the Alamanni Constantius still further increased his prestige. His popularity on other grounds earned him a support which would in all likelihood ensure his promotion when a vacancy occurred and a new Augustus was called for.

All the actions and policies of Diocletian were based upon precedent. He had planned such a revision of his position every ten years as Augustus had practised. The tenth year of his reign had been marked by the appointment of the sub-emperors, the Cæsars. The twentieth would again be an occasion for reviewing the state of affairs and making any changes required. Nineteen years had passed since the death of Carus, when Diocletian and Maximian celebrated their triumph: nineteen years of rapid change, reform, reorganization and renewal of the life of the state. The triumph marked the completion of the work. After it was over, Galerius spent some time at Nicomedia with Diocletian. The convenient time had come to speak.

The line which Galerius took was a subtle one, and appeared to have no connection with Constantius. He put forward the proposition that the Christian Church was a danger to the state they had spent so much time in rebuilding. It was an alien element totally incompatible with the type of monarchy which Diocletian had introduced. . . . Diocletian seems to have agreed

with this. . . . The Church was, in fact, a rapidly expanding power, which daily increased in wealth, numbers and influence over public opinion. The remarkable origin of the Christian faith had coloured its subsequent history. It had never been a *religio licita*, a permitted organization. Ever since its first contact with the Roman state in the reign of Nero it had been officially forbidden, though, by such men as Traian, not deliberately persecuted. This status had been so far beneficial to it that it had gained recruits only from the most determined, fearless and clear-thinking persons, and had been free from any kind of governmental interference with its internal organization. It had spread – particularly in the great cities of the empire, such as Rome, Milan and Alexandria – made its own laws, rules and customs, evolved its own system of government through bishops and synods, elected its own officers, and in every way had grown in freedom, expressing its own spirit in its actions. Its collisions with the state – notably in the reign of Valerian – had been unfortunate, but had done little harm to the Church. The superiority of freedom and individuality over official superintendence and formal control was visible in the result. The banned organization had gradually gathered most of the powers which the state had rejected. It preached the creed of the supremacy of the spirit over the letter. It had absorbed and digested the intellectual discipline of Greek philosophy. It had taken over a good deal of the Stoic tradition and its old republican notions of fraternity and publicity. Even while Galerius and Diocletian, secluded in the palace at Nicomedia with guardsmen at the door, sat secretly discussing these things, some Christian bishop, only a few hundred yards away, was probably shouting his gospel from a pulpit to a large audience with all the ardour and conviction of Gaius Gracchus addressing a political meeting. The same bishop, if cross-examined, would probably have turned out to possess opinions on the merits of poverty, and the virtues of brotherhood, remarkably like those expressed by Fabricius several centuries before.¹ And he would almost certainly have consented to be led away to gaol rather than admit that an earthly monarch could be the incarnation of the divine power of the universe: very much in the spirit of Cato. Diocletian could hardly deny these things.

¹ See above, Ch. IV, section IV.

Galerius got his way. It was decided that steps should be taken to check the spread of Christianity and to restrict its activities. All that was necessary was to re-issue and confirm the old law. . . . It was directed that all churches should be demolished, all copies of the sacred books destroyed, and all convicted Christians put outside the law. Diocletian stipulated that no blood should be shed. The action taken would result in Christianity withering and dying.

It might possibly have had this effect but for the way in which Christians took up the challenge. The copy of the new edict posted outside the palace at Nicomedia was instantly torn down. The slow execution of the criminal did not produce the results anticipated. Several fires broke out in the palace itself. According to Galerius they were due to the Christians, according to the Christians, to Galerius. Disorder and unrest followed, throughout the Asiatic provinces. A second edict was therefore published ordering the arrest and confinement of all Christian priests. It was still ordered that no blood was to be shed.

The result of these acts does not seem to have been all that the government expected. The prisons were soon crowded, and, although it is probable that none of them would altogether have passed the modern standard as a model prison, the government nevertheless had the embarrassing expense and trouble of looking after a large number of persons who seemed to have taken up their abode for good in gaol. When at last the feast of the *Vicennalia* arrived – the celebration of the twentieth year of Diocletian's reign – the authorities took advantage of the usual general amnesty to turn out all the Christians who could be got rid of. All who would sacrifice to the divine monarch might go: and if a little judicious torture would persuade the obstinate to take advantage of the imperial clemency, it might be applied. . . . Some bold spirits withstood all persuasion and remained firm in their insanitary dungeons; weaker brethren gave way to inducement; some were thrown out under protest, vehemently denying the slander that they had fulfilled the required condition by sacrificing to idols. Altogether, it is probable that the *Vicennalia* of Diocletian could not be called the unclouded success he had hoped. . . . He left Rome earlier than was provided for in the programme. Before he reached Nicomedia he was seriously ill. The sickness was probably

what we nowadays call a nervous breakdown. For more than a year he disappeared from public view. When he once more became visible, he was a changed man, the wreck of his former self, and he was never again the man he had been.

It was after his reappearance that the Fourth Edict was published, rendering the profession of Christianity a capital crime, and enforcing a test for it; but it is probable that Diocletian was in no condition to take much part in this reversal of his earlier policy. Twelve months later he resigned the empire, and retired, like Sulla, into private life. He had built a great palace at Spalato, near Salonæ in Dalmatia, the land of his birth.¹ There, for eleven years to come, he dwelt in calm seclusion. Only once he emerged to take part in the politics of the day; only twice or thrice we hear of him. He had taken up the government of the empire as a duty. He laid it down again without regret.

VI

The moment for which Galerius had so carefully prepared had now arrived. He had been well aware from the first that Constantius stood close to the Christian community. The first wife of Constantius, the mother of his son Constantine, had been Helena, who appears in the calendar of Christian saints as St. Helena; and all the Christian writers of the age represent him as a sympathizer. He had held his tongue so far. Galerius had intended to force him either to declare for his Christian friends, and so to break with his imperial colleagues and sacrifice his promotion – or else to declare against the Christians and so to lose their support. Constantius steadily avoided either alternative. When Diocletian abdicated, the question would therefore arise, which of the Cæsars was to succeed him? In spite of all the elaborate provision he had made, the same old spectre of civil war was at his elbow. Constantius was in a powerful position and would be quite able to hold his own. Diocletian solved the problem by inducing Maximian also to abdicate. The two Augusti retired at the same moment; and at the same moment the two Cæsars stepped into the vacant places.

Constantius, however, suffered under one disadvantage. His

¹ A plan of this palace will be found in H. B. Walters' *The Art of the Romans*, p. 43. The building represented an epoch in the history of architecture.

son Constantine, who had been educated at the imperial court of Nicomedia under the personal supervision of Diocletian, was still at Nicomedia, a hostage in the hands of Galerius. The latter therefore had control over the choice of the new Cæsars. The general expectation had been that one of them would be Constantine himself and that the other would be Maximian's son Maxentius. The surprise was general when Galerius secured the nomination of two tools of his own, Maximin Daia and Severus. Constantius, however, still held his tongue. He was too wise to raise objections which he could not at the moment back up with force. His first object was to get his son safely out of Nicomedia. Here Constantine's own daring and trenchant character played a part. He escaped one night during the summer soon after Diocletian's abdication. Killing the post horses behind him to render pursuit impossible, he got off clear, and joined his father at Boulogne. A few days later they were safe in Britain.

Constantine's escape was one of the decisive events of history. The fury of Galerius was the measure of the advantage he had lost. Constantius died at York a year later. He had stood his ground just long enough to fulfil his function as an indispensable link. Constantine was acknowledged by the army at York as his father's successor.

What was Constantine's status? His father had been the senior Augustus: and surely the senior Augustus, if any man, had the right to nominate his son to what office he thought fit! But Constantine had some of the characteristics of his father. He realized that it was unnecessary to worry very much about these legal abstractions. The future would belong to the man who could place in the field the strongest army and who could sway the largest mass of public opinion. . . . Galerius at first rejected with rage the overtures which Constantine made to him. Reflection, and the shrewd advice of his counsellors, made him change his mind. He acknowledged Constantine, but as Cæsar, not as Augustus. Severus was promoted to the vacant purple. Constantine accepted this, and waited.

VII

Three months after the accession of Constantine, Italy followed the example of Gaul and Britain by rising in revolt.

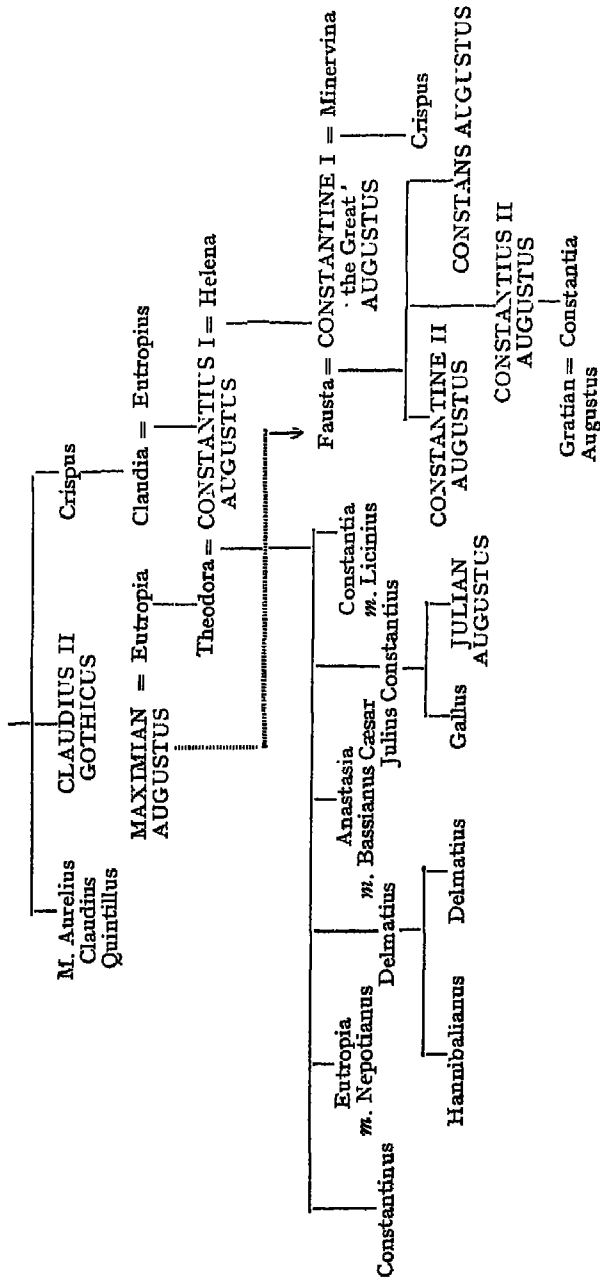
Young Maxentius was its leader: and with him was the military skill of his father, the ex-emperor Maximian. Two efforts made by Galerius to assert his authority in Italy were decisively defeated. The whole of the west, from Britain down to Africa, had repudiated Galerius; and the accession of Maxentius in Italy was followed by the immediate cessation of all penal action against the Christian Church. As a peaceable arrangement had to be made between the parties, Diocletian temporarily left his retirement to preside at a congress at Carnuntum.

Some kind of peace was patched up. It was settled that Licinius should become Augustus in place of Severus; that Constantine and Maximin Daia should be Cæsars, that Maximian should again abdicate and that Maxentius should retire. Such a settlement Maxentius flatly refused to accept, and in maintaining his ground he had the solid support of Italy. Maximin Daia was so annoyed by the proceedings of the congress that he declared himself Augustus without consulting any higher authority. The confusion became worse confounded when Maximian, visiting Gaul for the long-deferred marriage of his daughter Fausta with Constantine, improved the occasion by recognizing Constantine as Augustus. With four Augusti, and two ex-Augusti, it was obvious that the great plan of Diocletian was in peril of being turned into nonsense. With a heavy heart he went back to his retirement. It had once seemed as if he had succeeded in resettling the empire. After all his high hopes he had evidently failed. The proceedings of Maximian promptly involved the latter in a quarrel with his son. He retired to the court of Constantine, where a home was made for him; while Maxentius proceeded to declare himself not only Augustus, but the sole Augustus. He asserted the right of Italy to the headship of the empire.

Six months after Maxentius had made this declaration in the west, Maximin and Galerius issued a fresh Edict in the east, stiffening the measures against the Christians. A reign of terror began in Asia and Syria: and from this time onward it became certain that the struggle would end in civil war.

Constantine had fixed his capital at Arles, where he was in easy touch with Italy. His government covered Gaul and Britain only, while Maxentius could draw upon the resources

THE HOUSE OF CONSTANTINE



of Italy, Spain and Africa. Galerius, Licinius and Maximin between them possessed the Illyrian, the Asiatic and the south-eastern provinces of Syria, Palestine and Egypt. The greater wealth of the east was counterbalanced by the superiority of the western man as a soldier. Constantine seems to have been the man who accurately foresaw the factors which would prove decisive. He divined the real trend of public opinion and the conditions of military success.

VIII

The position of Maxentius was the first to be shaken. He had owed his success to a combination of the Italian landowners who objected to the taxation imposed by Galerius, and the Christians who objected to the persecution of their religion. Maxentius alienated the landlords by himself imposing too severe taxation for the defence of Italy; while at the same time his private life estranged the Christians. Communications were secretly opened with Constantine. The landlords Constantine could reassure. If he became Augustus, and ruler of Italy, he could reduce the expenses involved in the present duplication of armaments and governments. The question of the Christians was more important.

Constantine had been educated by Diocletian, and it goes without saying that he had grown up in the creed of the Unconquered Sun. He would have been strangely obtuse if he had failed to discover, as he grew to manhood, that some of the chief votaries of this cult were the most dangerous enemies of himself and his father: and the discovery not improbably made him look about him for other friends. His mother was a Christian; and his father had all his life been on the side of a large and generous toleration. The 'set' so given to Constantine's thought and feelings made it natural that he should have a keen sympathy with the persecuted Christians, and that he should step into his father's place as their chief, if quite unobtrusive, protector. The step from such a cult as that of Sol Invictus into the Christian faith was far shorter and simpler than a similar change from old-fashioned Roman paganism. In later years Constantine told Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea the story of the wonderful cross he saw in the sky, and the dream he had afterwards, that he must take this sign as his own symbol. He

had it carried out in gold and gems – and he showed Eusebius the actual jewel. This jewel – the ‘Labarum’ – he wore upon his helmet.

No one can now say exactly when Constantine stepped across the narrow but deep gulf that separated the cult of Sol Invictus from the religion of Christ. It is probable that his private feelings made the passage long before his prudence as a statesman permitted his public actions to follow. Some of the ambiguity was intentional. The battle had to be fought out in the prisons of Asia and Syria before the time could come when he might be useful. He had ruled in Gaul for five years before Galerius sullenly gave up the attempt to extinguish Christianity, and went back to the policy of Diocletian. He proposed to allow the Christian religion, under certain restrictions which would probably reduce it to a nullity. Constantine joined in signing the edict of toleration.

A month later, Galerius was dead.

The disappearance of the man who had been responsible for all the trouble set free the hands of Constantine. Almost at once he offered Licinius a bargain; namely, his sister Constantia, and the possible reversion of the empire, in return for friendly neutrality. Licinius accepted. Constantine then (secure from a blow in the back) turned his attention to Italy. It is probable that he came to a definite agreement with the landlords and the bishops. He had reached the conclusion that the support of the Christians was strong and reliable and that he could lean upon it without fear.

Sixteen months after the death of Galerius he was ready. With a Striking Force trained in the frontier wars of Gaul he crossed the Alps. Maxentius had made vast preparations in defence. The speed of Constantine anticipated every move and outpaced every measure of Maxentius. He destroyed one army at Turin and another at Verona. Throwing himself upon Rome, he forced Maxentius to fight a battle at Saxa Rubra in defence of the city. His legionaries carried the sacred monogram, the labarum, upon their shields. Maxentius lost his throne and his life on the fatal day when the Mulvian bridge collapsed under the weight of the fugitives, and those upon it were drowned. In less than two months from the day he entered Italy, Constantine was the master of Rome, and of all the provinces of the west.

How carefully he had prepared his advent can be seen by his reception. He was welcomed as a deliverer: no proscription stained his name. He was especially friendly to the Christian churches. The meaning of this friendliness became visible when, in the following spring, he met Licinius at Milan to fulfil the terms of their agreement. The famous Declaration of Milan which he then induced Licinius to sign, was the charter of the Christian Church. By its terms freedom of conscience was proclaimed to all religions within the provinces ruled by Licinius and Constantine.

IX

Maximin Daia heard with consternation of the fall of Maxentius and the policy of religious toleration. The last chance of victory for the old order was the possibility that sudden attack might have upon Licinius the same effect that it had had upon Maxentius. The conference of Milan was interrupted by the news of Maximin's invasion of Europe. He was too late. Licinius was far better prepared for war than Maxentius had been. After a severe defeat at Heraclea, Maximin fled back to Syria and there died. On June 13, in the year 313, Licinius promulgated the Declaration of Milan at Nicomedia – and no one tore it down. Ten years and four months had passed since the publication of the First Edict of persecution. Now the answer had arrived. Those who had appealed to force had perished by force. Of all the persecutors, only Diocletian was left, a man doomed to see his life's work undone and his work dissolved. . . . Yet not altogether. What he was doomed to see was the unravelling of his work and its reweaving by another craftsman. Nothing that he had done was thrown away.

The moment Maximin was gone Licinius became of no further use to Constantine. The Striking Force was brought back to Noricum; a cause of quarrel was found, and at the battle of Cibalis near Sirmium the long spell of Illyrian domination was broken. Admitting himself beaten, Licinius consented to hand over most of Illyria to Constantine, and to retire to Asia. In two years, therefore, Constantine had destroyed the ghost of Italian imperialism and the substance of Illyrian supremacy. From Spain to the Black Sea – all was his. With

the exception of Thrace, the whole European dominion of Rome was in his hands.

With the reconquest of Italy and Illyria and the Declaration of Milan, Constantine set in earnest about his work of reconstruction and reform. Diocletian had begun it, and much of his work would remain: but the aim of Constantine was to remake it on simpler principles. The system of Diocletian had broken down through its own complexity – especially his over-elaborate and too-involved scheme for the succession. Constantine had in mind a simpler plan. If he too proved a failure and if no such scheme as he hoped was possible, then civilization would fall to pieces of its own incapacity.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT AND HEREDITARY MONARCHY

(A.D. 314 – A.D. 379)

I

Eight years passed, during which a profound peace marked the Roman world. An era of tumult, passion, trouble and transformation had passed over the world, which now took a breathing space to look about itself with wonder at the changes. Even some of the old problems had been lost in the confusion. Gone were the affluent old days of Lucullus and Crassus – gone, as if they had never been, the days of Spartacus and King Tryphon. The leisured days of Antoninus – gone! Where was the oligarchy? Vanished at last under the stress of war, bankruptcy, proscription and confiscation. The senate still existed – but new footsteps rang on its pavements, and voices new in tone and modulation spoke in its chambers. The old army whose deputations had dictated policy to Augustus and Antonius – the citizen army – was changed past recognition. Even the cymbals and pipes of Elagabalus were silent. Bishops went in and out where once only flamens and vestals were seen. But above and beyond all other changes was that in the heart and centre. There, instead of the cold proud Augustus, or Commodus with his face like an Asiatic Greek god, stood a tall, slender dark man, with an aquiline nose and almost ascetic face of the kind frequently seen in British naval officers, and in a familiar type of New Englander: a serious man, not lounging negligently on a couch, in a rather frequently washed white woollen toga, like Augustus, but clad in a purple silk robe, and surrounded by solemn officials with gorgeous insignia of office. Even the divine monarchy of Aurelian and Diocletian had had its day and gone. Constantine founded a monarchy which, though still surrounded with defences and safeguards

meant to protect the man and his authority, was not exempt from the common law of mankind. Together with the meanest of his people he was subject to the law of the state and the law of the Church.

Like every statesman, Constantine was compelled to work with materials, and under circumstances and conditions, which he had had no share in creating. He himself was guiltless of any responsibility for the long years of war, plague and confusion which had impoverished the empire and upset the manners and habits of its citizens. In those years trade had been destroyed, money depreciated and debased, land left untilled; men had fled from their workaday duties – not always without reason – and sometimes had taken to unauthorized means of earning a living. It was only the accident of the circumstances in which he found himself that made him continue and confirm the policy of making men responsible to the law for the performance of their work. The agriculturalist was becoming tied to his land, the soldier to his profession, and every man to the state in which he had been born; social classes and occupations were becoming hereditary; a system of caste was rapidly growing up. Constantine's special work – the particular contribution he made to life and thought – was the way in which he reconstructed the central power, the protectorship of the state, which had once been the principate of Augustus. He grasped the truth that the one ruinous fault of that principate had been the system of succession, which had involved the empire in a series of destructive civil wars. It was his aim to drop Diocletian's co-optative system, and to return to the idea of a single personal ruler and a hereditary right of succession.¹ If this system were to succeed, it needed to be supported by a new method of ensuring that the hereditary ruler should be properly advised and his work correctly done. If the monarchy were to be hereditary, it must be fool-proof: and if it were to be fool-proof it must be hereditary.

Another factor entered into the calculation. With the old oligarchy and the old army had gone both the attempts at making permanent a nucleus of Roman citizens who should preserve the Roman type and its tradition. The oligarchy had petrified

¹ Coleman: *Constantine and Christianity* (Columbia University Studies, No. 60), pp. 112–115.

and crumbled; the army had softened and dissolved. The tradition still remained. A new body was called for, to preserve it, develop it and hand it down. Constantine slowly built up an organization which was at one and the same time an advisory council to guide the hereditary monarch, and a board of trustees for the perpetuation of the Roman tradition. His consistorium became a permanent body of councillors, friends, agents and assistants, to which the name of *Comitatus* gradually became attached, and that of *comites* to its members. This council, with its head, the hereditary monarch, was the real government of the empire: upon it, the bureaucracy depended.

Constantine took full advantage of the vast and uniform organization of the Christian Church. Through the bishops and their regular synods and conferences, he kept firmly in touch with public opinion. No other organization existed in the Roman world with such powers of collecting and expressing the opinion of the masses.¹ After his conquest of Italy and the Declaration of Milan, he gradually moved away from his pagan connections, though he still retained the symbol of the Unconquered Sun. Probably most of the followers of Sol Invictus went with him. He himself was not yet a baptized Christian. He had given the church freedom, and even privileges, but he had not given Christianity any exclusive monopoly of these privileges. Like his father, he had one face for all men.

II

Licinius, still reigning over the Asiatic provinces, recognized that the logical outcome of Constantine's policy was a single monarch and a single empire. Some of his apprehension was visible in his policy towards the church. The popularity of Constantine led Licinius to place various restrictions upon its expression. Upon the Declaration of Milan he never went back, and he seems to have had no very profound dislike to Christianity as such. What he dreaded was Constantine's influence. The unity of the church throughout the empire meant that the empire was still politically one: and if the

¹ But there are signs that Constantine tried to develop a system of provincial councils or parliaments which on the secular side could correspond to the ecclesiastical synods. Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (1926), pp. 497-499.

church were for Constantine, his claims would be hard to resist. Licinius carefully removed all Christian officers and officials from his service. Synods were forbidden. But these measures did very little to hinder the spread of Constantine's influence in the east.

Eight years after the battle of Cibalis, Constantine was again ready. His first step was a Gothic campaign on the Danube, designed to prevent the Goths from raiding Illyria while he was engaged with Licinius. The agreement which he reached with them enabled him to turn south with reasonable confidence. A vast army was assembled along the Thracian border. Constantine's son Crispus was given command of the fleet. Crispus was now twenty-three years old – a promising youth, who for five years past had held the rank of Cæsar, and the government of Gaul. Licinius also made vast preparations. His troops outnumbered those of Constantine, but were less well trained, and he had much the larger and – as it proved – the less powerful fleet. The lines of attack and defence ran along the river Hebrus to Hadrianople. The contest was on quite as great a scale as the campaign of Philippi – and many a hundred years was to pass before such armaments again faced one another in Europe.

Constantine was successful in forcing the passage of the river and shattering the defence. Vast numbers of prisoners fell into his hands, while Licinius took refuge in Byzantium. The eastern fleet held the straits, and it was impossible for Constantine to revictual his army satisfactorily by the land route. Either he must take Byzantium, or retreat. If he retreated his prestige would sustain a nasty fall; and to take Byzantium was easier said than done.

At this point Crispus entered the fray. He attacked the straits with his fleet, and after a two-days' naval struggle he forced a passage. The western army could now be revictualled – and Constantine was saved. The siege was vigorously pressed. Meanwhile, a new Asiatic army had been recruited from Anatolia. Licinius escaped from Byzantium to take command. Constantine followed him with the Striking Force, and at Chrysopolis broke and destroyed the relieving army. Licinius, driven into Nicomedia by this second defeat, surrendered.

The battle of Chrysopolis meant that the whole empire was now reunited in the hands of a single government: Constantine's.

III

No sooner was this great and desirable object achieved, than a sudden and startling re-arrangement took place in the relationships of the imperial family. Hitherto it had been fighting its way forward. No serious question had arisen concerning the division of the spoils. Now it had arrived. Here were the spoils – the dominion of the world. To whom did they belong?

It would have been dangerous to reveal such thoughts in the presence of Constantine: but the secrecy with which they were held made no difference to their strength. The stakes were the highest for which it is possible for men to play: and one of the contestants was fierce old Maximian's daughter. Maximian had always been a fearless and headlong man, who did not calculate too closely: and in this she was like him.

Crispus, the eldest son of Constantine, had been Cæsar, and his father's obvious successor, ever since the year 317. He was highly thought of, and his success in the naval battle in the straits raised his prestige and reputation. By many observers he was considered the obvious and inevitable heir of Constantine. But Crispus was the son of Constantine by a woman of no social standing, to whom he had been united in an inferior form of marriage. Although, as far as we know, he was never penalized in any way on account of his mother's status, Crispus lacked the advantages of Constantine's younger children, whose mother, Fausta, was the daughter and the sister of emperors. When he was made Cæsar, the eldest son of Fausta – a mere child – was also made Cæsar. It is difficult not to trace in this appointment the shadow of rivalry and jealousy. The little Constantine was incapable of any sort of government. He was too young even to learn it. All he could do was to keep his place warm for the possibilities of the future.

But the conquest of the east blew up into flame the passions that hitherto had been merely smouldering. In the year following his great success, Crispus was recalled from his Gallic

command. The rule of Gaul was given instead to one of Fausta's sons, aged about eight. Later still, a remarkable incident took place. Constantine published an edict offering reward and protection to those who gave information concerning conspiracy against his life and government. There is no evidence that this edict has any bearing upon the case of Crispus; but it is again difficult not to think of it in connection with his recall from Gaul. Strong influences seem to have been at work. The only persons in whose way he stood were Fausta's children.

Nothing more happened at the moment. Constantine was preoccupied with the questions connected with the Council of Nicæa, the first of those great councils which were to determine the fate and future of Christianity. Constantine realized the importance of preserving the unity of the Church and increasing its influence. On success in this aim rested the only hope of preserving the unity of civilization. The Arian controversy, which broke out at this time, was the revival, within the Christian organization, of that very same unlikemindedness which a common Christianity seemed to have overcome. Arius, the priest of Baucalis in Alexandria, had chosen this critical hour in the history of the church to question the real divinity of Jesus Christ, and to deny that He was of the same substance as the Father: in other words, he denied that Jesus Christ had ever, by His birth, life and death, bridged the gulf between God and man. The orthodox leaped to their feet to declare that this struck the very essence out of Christianity. Unless the controversy could be settled, the power on which Constantine relied to bind together the empire into one unity would itself be torn in sunder. He arranged the place and time of the Council, saw that it should be representative, paid the expenses of the delegates, presided over the critical sessions, and obtained results which, for the time, were satisfactory. A serious schism was avoided.

It was only when these absorbing activities were over, and he had returned to Rome, that the trouble blazed up again. The twentieth year of his reign – his *Vicennalia* – had come, and he kept the feast. There can no longer have been any secret of his intention to build a new capital for the Roman empire further east, on a site more convenient and more accessible

than that of Rome ever had been. Ilium – the site of ancient Troy, the home of Æneas – had been suggested: but it had practical drawbacks which finally excluded it from consideration. . . . In the midst of the *Vicennalia* Crispus was arrested, examined before Constantine, and sent to the remote station of Pola in Istria. There, shortly afterwards, he was executed.

So confounding an event obviously conceals a long and serious story. Constantine was no Ivan the Terrible; he had always been, and he continued to be, a man of gentle character, much like his father. The mystery of Crispus – it was never cleared up – was made still more strange when, some time later, Fausta herself was arrested – and, what is more, executed by the accepted Roman method in serious domestic cases, of suffocation in a hot bath.

Later tradition agreed that the death of Fausta and the death of Crispus were connected: but the details it furnished were vague and various, and obviously no complete account of the matter was ever published. It was said that Fausta had accused Crispus of offering her violence: and that this was the charge on which he was executed by a shocked and revolted father. It was said that Fausta was herself afterwards detected in an intrigue with a servant: and that this was why she suffered. The only unmistakable outline of fact which emerges from the haze is that Fausta contrived the death of Crispus upon a charge which scandalized Constantine and caused him to act without adequate consideration; and that she was afterwards convicted of having falsely accused an innocent man. . . . Constantine left Rome hastily, and never again returned.

He plunged into the work of planning and building his new imperial capital. He had finally selected Byzantium on the Bosphorus – a site of which he knew the military value by personal experience three years before. It was to be a city-fortress, the home of the new monarchy. He proposed to call it New Rome; but the world took over the task of naming it, and the name it chose was *Constantinople*.

IV

There was fate in this – strong, irresistible guidance not to be ignored or defied. Had Crispus lived, history would have been different: a single able man would have succeeded

Constantine, and the new monarchy would have grown. All this was now out of the question. The old troubles would reappear. Partition and disunion would begin. The hand of God was against the unity of the world-empire.

But Constantinople was finished. It arose new and splendid from the hands of its builders, the first purely Christian city. The only pagan temples within its walls were preserved in memory of ancient days. The city which Constantine built soon vanished under the extensions and improvements of his successors, but the new capital, Constantinople, grew in wealth and splendour and developed an individuality of its own. It still stands, and is still numbered among the great and august cities of the world. For many hundreds of years it was the strongest fortress and the most brilliant centre of civilization in Europe. It was destined to stand while Rome fell, and to carry on the tradition of Rome to future ages.

After the death of Crispus, Constantine made no further attempt to guide the succession. The prospects were ominous. . . . Not only had he allowed all the three sons of Fausta to acquire an equal claim to the empire, but he had bestowed the title of Cæsar upon his nephew Delmatius too, and had given his nephew Hannibalianus a status which it might be difficult to explain away. As a result of his policy there was now emerging into view something at which Antoninus Pius would have been amazed, and Nerva incredulous—an imperial house or caste: a circle of half a dozen families, all related by a common descent from the emperor Constantius I, and running to a very fair number of separate individuals; and all of them with a hereditary claim to the empire. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect Constantine to have been immediately prepared with the right laws of succession, which it took later ages many centuries of trial and error to evolve. In any case, he had evidently given up the attempt, and was leaving events to take their own course.

Not long before his death, Constantine was baptized into the Christian Church. His action was the final proof that his sympathy with Christianity had been real. He had no longer any end to serve, or any purpose to fulfil, save his own personal satisfaction. He was only a few years over sixty when he died.

His Lying-in-State was a striking and interesting novelty.

Few Roman emperors before him had had any opportunity for that solemn ceremony. As he lay upon his bier, glittering in the purple and gold of his imperial dignity, the proceedings of his court and household went on without pause. Through the chamber where he lay, his people were permitted to file, to look their last upon him. They were expected to act as though he were still alive.

He had done his work. Nearly fifty-four years had passed since Diocletian's accession. The new monarchy had introduced order and discipline instead of chaos.

v

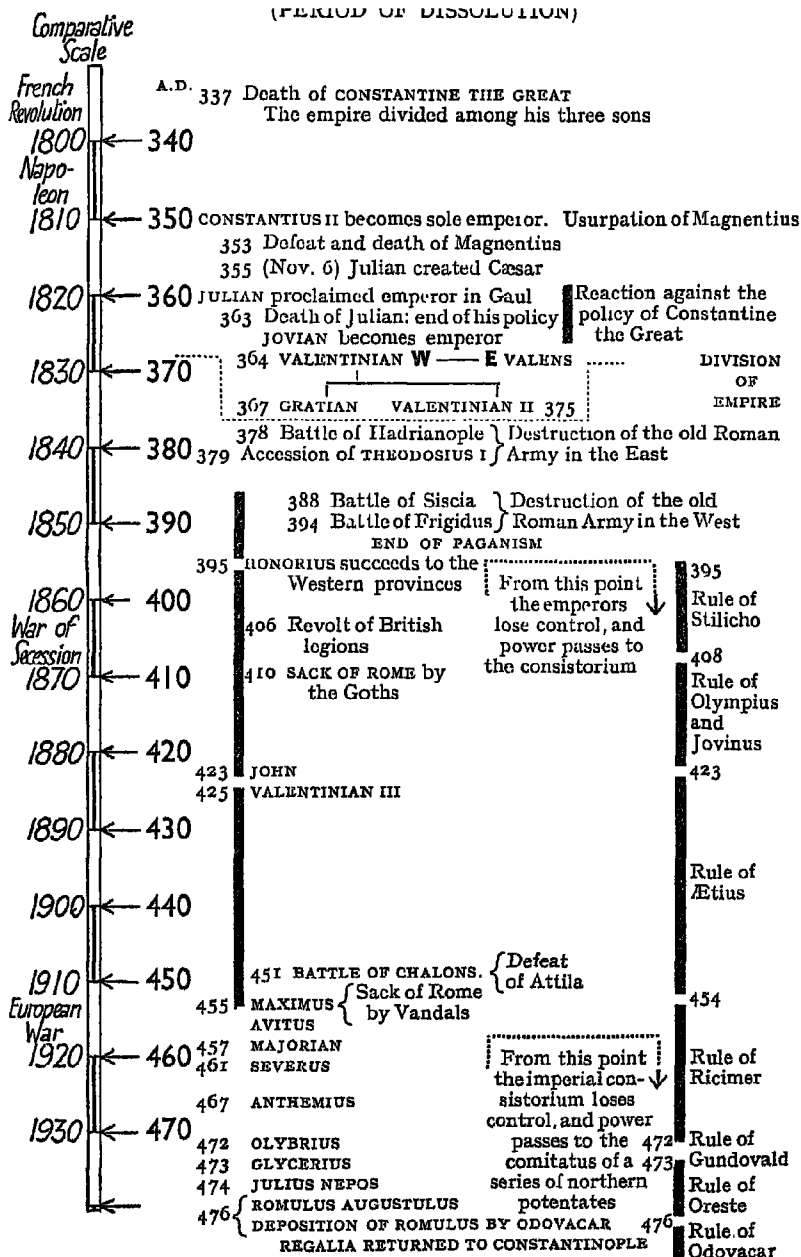
Some little time elapsed before it was possible for his sons to arrive at Nicomedia: but during that time there were deep consultations behind the scenes. The great officials and officers had their own interests to think of.

An empire, like a business, cannot carry an unlimited amount of non-productive or overhead costs. Constantine's imperial caste was expensive, and threatened to become more so. There were four Cæsars, not counting Hannibalianus. How many of these were to become Augusti? Could the empire pay for four imperial courts? If not, on what principle was the line to be drawn? There were differences of opinion. Finally the dispute became a contest between those who supported the descendants of Constantius' first wife Helena, and those who supported the descendants of his second wife Theodora. The descendants of Helena meant—now that Crispus was dead—the children of Fausta. Constantius II, the son of Constantine, had pledged his word to his cousins, the Theodorans, that they should be safe. He was not allowed to make good his word. A palace revolution took place. Of the descendants of Theodora, only two were left alive—the children Gallus and Julian. The three descendants of Helena, the sons of Fausta, were created Augusti.

Constantine's attempt to preserve the Roman world as a single unit was therefore undone. But it was not wholly undone. The world had not slipped back to its old ways. The struggle which once would have devastated provinces and ruined thousands of human beings, was now confined to the walls of a palace. The structure of the new monarchy had

EIGHTH CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(PERIOD OF DISSOLUTION)



The End of the Story

limited the field of dispute, and it went on now to determine other features of the course of events.

For a few years the empire bore the weight of three imperial establishments. Then Constans killed his brother Constantine II, and reunited the western provinces. Two establishments the empire seemed able to stand; and by degrees the truth seemed to become clear that the new system of administration called for so much more attention from the man at the top, that it would never be possible for one emperor to superintend the whole as one single unit. Two at least were called for. When Constans fell, it was thus not because he was superfluous. The revolt of Magnentius, which overthrew him, was an old-fashioned revolt inspired by old-fashioned motives – and its fate is interesting to watch.

The new monarchy proved better able than the old to resist rebellion. Although Constantius, the surviving brother, was hardly a man of outstanding ability, he was surrounded by the new organization which Constantine the Great had created, and he could appeal to the new and lofty conception of loyalty which Constantine had learnt in his youth and had taught his sons and followers. Advancing from his great fortress of Constantinople, Constantius met the armies of the west at Mursa.

The old imperial government of former ages had been so much at the mercy of military revolt, that Constantius and his advisers set a new and startling precedent when they refused the advances of Magnentius, and defied his power. They were able to support their defiance. Their mailed Asiatic horsemen overthrew and trampled down the German infantry of Magnentius, as effectively as, in later ages, arquebusiers and musketeers shot down the armoured knight. The victory of Mursa showed that the new government organization had resources which could seldom be at the command of a rebellious provincial governor. It had asserted the power of right against might; and it had certainly proved that might was no longer always with the rebel. The western provinces were once more brought under the control of the central government.

But it became quite clear, when Constantius came into possession of the united empire, that the work of administering it was too much for a single man. He needed a helper. Of all the descendants of Helena, he alone survived. There were

however (as we have seen) two descendants of Theodora—Gallus and Julian. It was resolved that, in spite of the past, a reconciliation should be attempted with the survivors of Theodora. The essay was not, at first, successful. The mind of Gallus had been hopelessly warped by his early experiences, and his own entourage had at last to appeal for rescue to Constantius. Gallus was therefore removed. His brother Julian, the last of the Theodorans, was given a trial, and showed more promising qualities. He was brought out of his retirement, married to the sister of Constantius, and placed in charge of the western provinces.

He proved successful.

VI

The influences which had injured the mind of Gallus, and made him impossible as a ruler, had not left Julian unscathed. He owed his escape from worse injury to a genuine love of literature, in which he must have been singular among the members of his family, who were none of them intellectual men. The study and practice of letters kept Julian sane, equipped him with knowledge, but made him a strangely unworldly person, whose adventures in an unliterary and unphilosophical world often surprise the onlooker, as they surprised himself. He had been educated by that brilliant but temperamental person, Eusebius, the Arian bishop of Nicomedia, who seems to have planted in his mind a love of learning and a dislike of the Christian religion. When Julian arrived at the imperial court, he seemed, to the critical eye of civilization, a wild backwoodsman, with the manners, and even the thoughts, of a prehistoric age. He suffered agonies, partly of shyness and partly of real apprehension, while he was inspected by various authorities, who subsequently conferred. On the whole, they were adverse. Some of them evidently penetrated with success to the subconscious mind of Julian, and foresaw the future with some prescience. The empress, however, was friendly, and Constantius II himself was a man who found the greatest difficulty in changing his mind. Finally, after being sent back for a while, Julian was approved, endorsed departmentally, given his papers and forwarded to the right quarter. He found himself with the dignity of Cæsar, and a post in Gaul where he

was in the command of an army. His knowledge of military matters was in all probability derived chiefly from the works of Homer, and was not very helpful to him. But a descendant of the first, the great Constantius could not be absolutely a fool. Julian made the discovery which others have made before and after his day – that to let the horse have his head is often the quickest way home.

The great organization, in charge of which Julian found himself, did not require brains at the top. It was supplied with brains from approved sources, and Julian merely had to take the necessary official steps to obtain all that was wanted. What the organization required in its chief was a certain general intelligence, and an ability to scheme a general policy; and here a familiarity with Homer was by no means useless. Julian's campaigns in the Rhineland were successful because he allowed the army to do its work unhampered by ignorant interference. His government in Gaul was popular, because he had grasped certain elementary maxims of policy. He did not interfere with the revenue service: but he threw on the floor¹ the order for a supplementary tax, which was presented for his signature – he refused to sign it and maintained his refusal even against the emperor: and the reasons he gave were the simple elementary ones which are everywhere and always true: that excessive taxation defeats its own ends and harms the taxpayer without benefiting the government. He had the old imperial instinct, which his grandfather had had, and Hadrian and Augustus before him – the tribunician instinct of Fabricius for the common man. He was spontaneously interested in widows and orphans, hard cases and lame ducks. This, which was natural and even unconscious on his part, was the secret of the affection he began to earn in Gaul.

Constantius was not so successful in the east as Julian was in the west. His campaigns on the Persian border met with serious reverses; and ultimately he ordered some of Julian's unconquered troops to be sent to him. But the troops were picked men who had been enlisted for service in Gaul only: the order was a violation of their conditions of service, and the prospect of transference to Mesopotamia seemed almost a

¹ A capital little picture of official life in ancient times, to be found in *Ammianus Marcellinus*, Book XVII, iii.

sentence of death and certainly a sentence of exile to them. Julian, compelled to submit to the order, did his best to mitigate the disaster for them. He even undertook to send their families with them. He met them at Paris in order to address them and persuade them. There was no thought of disloyalty in his mind. After hearing him without enthusiasm, they retired to console themselves with a general breaking-up feast. Perchance the spirit that was to preside over Paris already haunted the spot. As the good wine flowed the feelings of the rough-riders and swordsmen of the Rhine rose to the flash point – and fired. Julian was aroused from his worried slumbers by an invasion of roaring enthusiasts with weapons, bowls of wine and torches in their hand. When, after much persuasion, he looked out, he was met with the unanimous shout of ‘Julian Augustus!’ He knew that these words might be a death-warrant if they were not made good. For a long time he argued with them. They were in that terrible and peculiar mood of crowds. The more he talked, the more, with gargantuan humour, the mob repeated its slogan. At last he was compelled to stand on a shield, and was elevated, according to the old custom, while the troops saluted him as ‘Augustus!’

Then they roared: ‘A diadem!’

‘I have never possessed a diadem!’ said Julian, with ridiculous common-sense.

They demanded his wife’s tiara; but Julian was superstitious and refused to wear a woman’s ornament. So they sent for a horse-frontlet – but he flatly declined to be crowned with it. Finally Maurus, a standard-bearer of the *Petulantes*, tore a chain off his own neck, and made a circlet, with which he crowned Julian; and Julian, no longer able to resist, made the formal acceptance: ‘Five gold pieces and a silver pound to each’ – the bonus which the emperors of later Rome paid on their accession. The die was cast!

VII

Human nature is a very curious thing. The army, which had crowned Julian because it did not want to leave Gaul, was now ready to go anywhere. Constantius was still on the Persian frontier. Julian – or rather the army – prepared plans which would have astonished Julius. There were men on his

staff who knew the geography of the northern frontier. While the main body of his troops set out by road, Julian himself with a picked corps slipped across country to the head waters of the Danube, obtained some kind of transport, and floated down the river. He surprised Sirmium by night. The governor was seized and brought before him.

The amazed governor said: 'You are a rash man !'

'Tell that to Constantius !' said Julian.

The famous march of Julian into Illyria gave him the empire. The mere impression it made upon public opinion was almost enough; but its daring had been dictated and guided by great military skill, and the new emperor had effectively blockaded Constantius into Asia before the latter realized what had happened. Constantius hurried back, but at Mopsucrene, near Tarsus, he was taken ill. He believed that fate was against him, and he had had a dream in which he saw his father, the great Constantine, come to warn him that his time was short. At Mopsucrene he died—naming Julian, it is said, as his successor.

So began the reign of Julian.

Even before the death of Constantius, Julian had announced in his communications to his new subjects a general religious toleration. The temples of the old religion were ordered to be re-opened, and Julian let his sympathy with it be publicly known. By the time he entered Constantinople it was obvious that a new and startling change was on foot—a counter-revolution against the policy of Constantine the Great.

We should do Julian an injustice if we imputed to him merely the wish to revive a few picturesque ceremonies and a few poetical ideas. His policy was a reaction against the whole system of Constantine. It was possible only because a great disappointment had chilled enthusiasm for Constantine's policy. At the very moment when it seemed to have triumphed, its main end, the spiritual reunion of the Roman world, had been defeated by the Arian schism.

Constantine, by his action at the Council of Nicæa, had ensured that the unity of the church should ultimately be preserved, and that his aim of securing the unity of civilization should ultimately be attained; but he had only achieved a vast, remote success of which he had hardly dreamed, and he

had failed to achieve the immediate practical success of which he had been thinking. The Arian schism had divided the victorious church into two warring factions. Constantius II, although careful and conscientious in his attempt to find the right side of the controversy, had taken the wrong one – the side on which lay the elements least favourable to the empire and least sympathetic with the common man. The Arian controversy had been a fatal event, because it marked the existence of a real spiritual division, a feud rooted in the depths of the mind and soul of those who conducted it. The pro-Arian rule of Constantius had been hateful to large sections of public opinion. An attempt to find a new common ground, a new basis of unity, was inevitable; and Julian's pagan reaction was the result. With him went many earnest men who were far superior in moral character and in ideals to the Maximins and their kindred whom Constantine and Licinius had overthrown. Their weapons were not of iron and steel. The new civil war was one of propaganda. They were earnestly desirous of sweetness and light. The pages of the *Historia Augusta*, of Ammianus Marcellinus, and of Julian himself survive to show the principles with which they were actuated. Not only was Julian proposing to go back to the old faith, but he was desirous of returning to the political ideals of Marcus Aurelius and Antoninus Pius. Marcus was his model.

The actual measures involved in this mild and amiable ideal were, however, of a most dangerous nature. Like Nerva, Julian began by abolishing espionage and political informing, on the ground that the methods employed had been hideously abused. He was, no doubt, right; and his view was the more generous view; but he threw away a weapon which was intended to protect the government against conspiracy; and had his reign lasted longer he might have experienced the consequences. He cut down the household of Constantius on the ground that it was of monstrous proportions and was unnecessary to the public good. He may have been right in thinking that it needed reform and retrenchment; but all he actually did was to dissolve the organization of Constantine, and attempt to run the empire with the kind of organization which Hadrian or Marcus had used. To him, all the lessons and the experience of two hundred years were useless. He purged the army

of Christian officers and men; but all his religious tests actually did was to weed out the bold and honest men who were not ashamed of their faith and to retain the shirkers who pretended to be pagans when it suited their book. He could not restore paganism without ordering the restoration of the property of the pagan cults. He reduced the imperial property and made demands upon the bishops which set the whole vast organization of the church humming with hostile activity. His propaganda was of little value beside these serious actions. Had he been a little less imbued with dislike of Christianity he would have seen that there was no hope of unity upon a pagan basis. The pagan cults were outworn and outmoded relics of long past times; the political methods of Hadrian were dead past recall. Chaos would have followed and Julian would have discovered these facts by bitter experience, had he not been called away to the Persian frontier.

But the fortune of Julian had turned. The men who had been the terror of the Franks and Alamanni had not the same superiority over the Persians. The heat and the dryness of Mesopotamia may have paralysed the skill and energy of men acclimatized to the plains of Flanders and the hills of the Vosges. Two columns were to converge upon Ctesiphon. One, under Procopius and Sebastian, was to follow the Tigris. Julian himself advanced down the Euphrates, accompanied by boats, without encountering serious opposition. The Persians retreated before him. Opposite Ctesiphon, and covering the city, a Persian army was unmasked – a tremendous affair, of mailed horsemen supported by light infantry and elephants. Julian decided to wait until his whole force was assembled. Crossing from the Euphrates to the Tigris above Ctesiphon, he found no sign of Procopius and Sebastian, and as the main Persian army was reported to be close at hand, Julian burnt his boats (which could not ascend the current of the Tigris) and began his retreat up the river. . . . The Persian main army was indeed at hand. The country was devastated on every side to prevent the Romans from obtaining supplies, while their march was harassed by overwhelming numbers of mailed horse-archers and elephants. The retreat was a nightmare. At last Julian, rushing out of his tent without armour, during a surprise attack, was pierced through the side with a javelin. He

lingered some little time; but the wound was mortal and he died on June 26th in the year 363.

Thus, after a reign of barely three years, he died of a wound received in action. He was the last male descendant of Constantius I, whom he seems to have resembled in personal appearance. It was necessary to elect a successor without delay, who could be relied upon to extricate the army. Jovian was chosen and saluted as Augustus. The dynasty of Constantine had ended.

VIII

The Persian king, too prudent to run risks with a still-powerful enemy who, if driven to bay, might yet turn and rend him, gave generous terms; and Jovian reached Roman territory with the army intact. It was time for a general stocktaking. Julian's policy had been a bold experiment. Its failure had for some time past been apparent, so that he who ran might read. A religious truce was, if not published, at any rate immediately deduced from the known opinions and actions of Jovian. Things were to remain as they had been. Jovian, however, lasted only six months. He was at once followed by a stronger man, Valentinian, an Illyrian officer. The acts of Julian were now undone; an attempt was made to restore the old organization; Julian's ministers were dismissed. The restoration was imperfect; and in the western provinces, at least, the harm done seems never to have been altogether made good.

Julian had pictured himself as an old Roman, a stalwart of the ancient times. But he had done no more than copy Marcus Aurelius. Such men as Camillus and Cato would have been considerably surprised at an old Roman who talked philosophy and imitated Socrates. But they would not have recognized Valentinian as a Roman at all. He had the sobriety and the energy of a Roman—but his savage cruelty, habitual, unsparing and cold-blooded, was wholly alien to the Roman spirit. The old tradition was dying. The disappearance of the oligarchy had indeed extinguished its last fortress. The army no longer educated men up to the old Roman standard. It was creating a new standard which was more like a common European type: and the new type was in its crude infancy.

Valentinian co-opted his brother Valens, and they shared

the empire, Valentinian taking the west with Milan, and Valens the east with Constantinople. The empire was unmistakably segregating into two halves. Even the brand of Christianity they entertained was different. Valens, like Constantius II, accepted Arianism as his creed: Valentinian was neutral. The few years after the death of Julian were a breathing time, a time of transition, while the world rested a little before the next tide in the affairs of men.

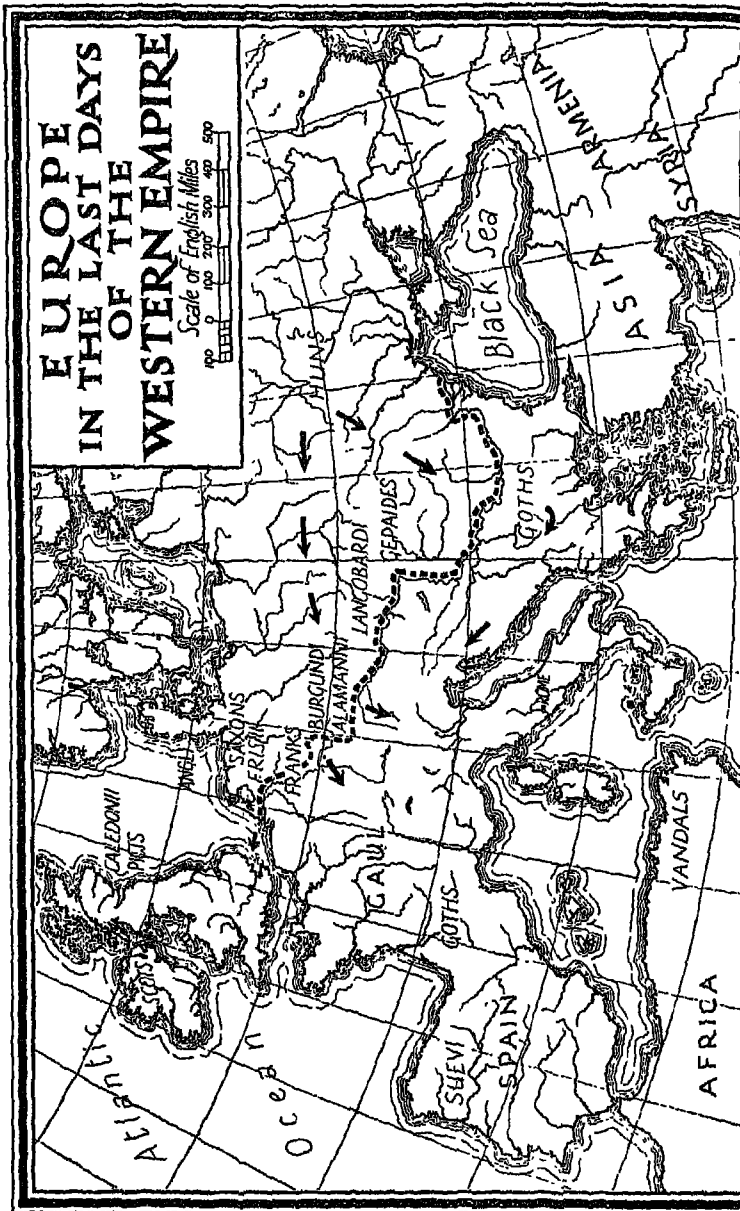
There was a good deal of chance in the way in which the succession was arranged. No one seemed able to solve the hitherto insoluble problem. Valentinian associated his son Gratian with himself: and the boy proved a singularly wise and sensible, but not a great ruler. On Valentinian's death, Gratian and his child brother, Valentinian II, reigned together over the west. This was in the year A.D. 375. The next year the pause was over. Strange rumours began to circulate in the empire. A great host of many nations was gathering beyond the Danube, preparing to cross.

IX

For nearly four hundred years the existence and the proximity of the Roman empire had been influencing and educating the peoples of central Europe: great changes, political, social and economic, had taken place beyond the Rhine and the Danube. The struggles and the revolutions of the new mid-European societies were never recorded in detail. For nearly fifty years now a great Gothic realm had been growing up on the Vistula. It stretched from the Euxine to the Baltic. Its influence had penetrated to the Danish Islands, the Elbe mouth and Sweden. The Gothic pressure, no longer held back or directed by Dacia, was pushing the mid-German tribes upon the empire. This was the situation when, at some time shortly before the year A.D. 376, the Huns entered the Gothic lands from the east. They overthrew the Gothic realm: the Gothic king committed suicide, and the Gothic tribesmen, abandoning their land (and probably the men who cultivated it also) retreated westward with their wives, families and retainers. A vast host gathered on the bank of the Danube. Valens was confronted by a request that he would allow them to settle in any vacant lands under his control.

The problem was a difficult one, but after long discussion the imperial government at Constantinople decided that the request should be granted. The conditions imposed were the surrender of all weapons of war, and the giving of a number of hostages, chiefly young children of good birth. From the first, the affair began to go wrong. The Roman officials accepted bribes to allow the Goths to keep their weapons. During the preliminary period of internment, while the settlement of the newcomers was being arranged, the food supplied to them was deficient in quantity and quality, and the Goths were obliged to part with their property and even to sell their children to obtain sufficient to live upon. The inevitable revolt followed. Compelled, in self-defence, to resort to force, the Goths spread over Illyria and down into Thrace, taking what they wanted and revenging themselves upon the defenceless provincials. The Roman troops were insufficient to make head against the vast barbarian host. Valens hurried back from a visit to Antioch and prepared to lead the Striking Force against the Goths. He was cautioned that Gratian was on his way from the west to reinforce and support him; but he saw no reason for waiting for Gratian. He believed himself to be equal to any emergency.

The Goths were camped about ten miles beyond Hadrianople. On the ninth of August in the year A.D. 378, Valens moved out of Hadrianople with what he doubtless supposed to be adequate information respecting their position and movements. The Goths seemed ready to negotiate; and Valens (who was by no means a pugnacious person) accepted their overtures. The troops, weary with hunger and thirst, waited in the sultry heat while the ineffectual conversations proceeded. Nothing came of them. Towards noon, an irregular attack, without orders, was made by some of the impatient troops. They were repulsed; and while this disorder was still distracting the attention of the Roman command, the event happened for which the Goths had all day been waiting. The Gothic cavalry had been absent, foraging. An urgent message had brought them back in force. Coming up on the Roman flank unmarked they threw the whole Roman army into confusion by a sudden onslaught which triumphantly carried all before it. The cavalry were driven off; the infantry were surrounded and cut down, as at Cannæ. Valens, badly wounded, was carried to a neighbouring house.



Europe in the Last Days of the Western Empire

Gothic pursuers surrounded it and, being resisted, set fire to the building. Valens perished in the flames.

X

No excuse can be put forward for the disaster of Hadrianople. The Master-General, Sebastian, who was mainly responsible, died in the battle.¹ The list of fallen was catastrophic. The Striking Force was wiped out. It was not now as it had been after Cannæ. At Hadrianople a tradition was irretrievably broken.

Gratian's duty now was to co-opt a new partner in the empire. He was a young man; but his instinct was sound and perhaps the advice of his council was wise. The choice fell upon Count Theodosius, a Spaniard of Italica, the native town of Traian and Hadrian. He was in his thirty-third year—a vigorous and soldierly man, with a good record of service and sprung of a good family. He needed both his vigour and his soldierly qualities, for it was to no sinecure that he was now appointed. He was sent to take up a task of the utmost difficulty, which would tax to the utmost his wisdom and his courage. The prestige of Rome had fallen; even the courage and confidence of Romans had declined. A man was needed who could reinspire and rebuild. Theodosius was the man. He settled himself at Thessalonica, and took up the task of pacifying Illyria.

He did not try to reconstruct the Roman army on its old pattern. We have seen the changes it had undergone since the army of Camillus grew into that of Scipio, and that of Scipio into that of Marius, and that of Marius into that of Constantine. This was the last change. The old Latin legionary foot-fighter was gone. When Theodosius began to recruit for his new army, he took ready-organized blocks of tribesmen, with their tribal chiefs complete, from beyond the Rhine and Danube, or from the disturbed provinces of Illyria. The last Roman army was no longer Italian, and it no longer fought for the republic. It formed the personal and paid entourage of the emperor. The oligarchy had gone, and had been replaced by a *comitatus*. The army had gone, and was replaced by these new fighting men, who became part of the *comitatus*. The two streams, long parted, were united again.

¹ He had also been responsible for the disaster to Julian: see back, sect. VII.

CHAPTER XXIV

THEODOSIUS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF EUROPE

(A.D. 379 – A.D. 476)

I

If the word 'greatness' implies the gift of influencing, persuading and compelling other men – then Theodosius the Great not only deserved the title, but was the last citizen of the Roman empire to do so. Something of the quality of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius lingered in him. He did not need, as Julian did, to copy them. His effort, all his life, was to avoid being too like them. An instinct for repose was part of his nature. He was a strong, active man, with a great fondness for idling. Deep down in him was a lethargy, a weariness, which he shared with his age. Every now and then it overcame him – sometimes in the form of an indisposition to act, and sometimes in the form of an indisposition to think. He was – like Antoninus – a cheerful, kindly man; but when the mood was on him, thought was too difficult, and he impatiently said and did things which shocked the world, and himself too.

But Theodosius had the unaccountable and indescribable gift of command. It came easily to him – which was fortunate. He only needed to sit down and talk, and for some reason all the people he talked to would do what he wanted. He was one of the last of the great talkers who had made possible the art of government by discussion and agreement. He had one great contemporary – Archbishop Ambrose of Milan; and in days to come Gregory the Great was to reign in Rome: but both these men were Churchmen. Theodosius could carry with him the sinners as well as the saints. Perhaps the secret of his power was that he could not only talk, but listen.

His task was to determine the character of the transition by which western Europe threw off the government of the Roman

imperial state, and began to split into separate and autonomous states on the basis of nationality. Theodosius was the statesman who prepared the way for the change.

The first important event of his reign was his baptism. Acholius, the bishop of Thessalonica, performed the ceremony. Immediately afterwards the new and renovated emperor – the first Roman emperor to receive the sacrament at the hands of a catholic and orthodox priest – announced a new religious policy. He intended to enforce the settlement of Nicæa which Constantine had obtained. The empire was to be united spiritually on that basis.

As soon as he had reduced Illyria to order, and made a definite settlement of the Gothic question, he celebrated his triumph at Constantinople, and allowed the prestige he had won to make its full impression upon his people. He then took in hand the work of executing the policy he had announced. All bishops and clergy who did not adhere to the settlement of Nicæa were expelled, and all church property was withdrawn from their custody. A council was called of bishops from sees within the dominions of Theodosius; and by this – the First Council of Constantinople – the creed of Nicæa was reasserted. Heavy penalties were placed upon heretical propaganda. In this policy, Theodosius at any rate had the justification that the creed he enforced was that of a majority of his subjects; and that if unity could not be obtained on this basis, it could not be obtained at all. He intended to try to obtain it.

Gratian and his advisers, in full sympathy with his policy, prepared – though with more caution – to carry it out in the western provinces. Arianism was not their foe. They challenged something older, and much more dangerous – the ancient cults of Rome, and the religion of Mithra. The ‘caves’ of Mithra were still in being in the west.¹ Mithraism had for centuries past been the chief religion of the rank and file of the old legionary army, the tradition of which, though weakened, was still unbroken. Caution was needed in handling it.

The disestablishment and disendowment of non-Christian religions in A.D. 382 did not indeed render them illegal: their

¹ Dill: *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (2nd edition, 1899), p. 83, with f.n. 6.

practice as a matter of private choice was still permitted: but they were no longer officially recognized. The senate at once attempted to secure some mitigation of the new law. For some time past the policy of Gratian had made him unpopular with the army. He had replied by forming a new bodyguard of Alanic tribesmen, who would have no connections in the regular army. But the new law of A.D. 382 was followed by immediate military revolt. The British legions threw off their allegiance, and elected Maximus, a Spaniard, in the good old style. Maximus was a man of ability. He organized an expeditionary force rapidly and with secrecy, and landed his army in Gaul before any news of his intentions could transpire. Gratian, at Paris, found that the rebel army was being received with open arms by the army of Gaul. He had only time to gallop for Lyons. At Lyons he was betrayed by a disloyal governor, handed over to his pursuers, and murdered.

Theodosius, confronted by the accomplished fact, was cautious, and parleyed. He was not ready to act against Maximus. Finally, it was agreed that he should recognize the legitimacy of Maximus' title in return for certain considerations. Maximus on his part was to guarantee the independence of Italy and its attached provinces under the rule of Gratian's younger brother, Valentinian II. On these conditions the treaty was signed.

II

The deputations from the senate which waited upon the imperial courts at Milan and Constantinople obtained satisfaction from neither source. The anti-pagan laws were to be carried out. Valentinian II, under the influence of Archbishop Ambrose, then at the height of his power, was as little likely as Theodosius to make any concessions. Maximus therefore felt the time ripe for action. Four years after his treaty with Theodosius he threw aside that scrap of paper, and crossed the Alps. Before he could reach Milan, Valentinian II and his mother had escaped to Aquileia, whence they took ship for Thessalonica. There Theodosius came to meet them.

It would have been impossible for Theodosius to have refused help in such a cause. The victory of Maximus implied the destruction of all that Theodosius stood for. He sealed

his undertakings by a marriage with Valentinian's sister Galla.

Maximus was a bold adversary. Far from hesitating or faltering, he came straight to look for Theodosius. He was already at Siscia, half way to Sirmium, when the army of Theodosius met him. Here came the first surprise. The Gauls, Britons and Germans who composed the army of Maximus were dazzled and overwhelmed by a new type of tactics, which Theodosius had evolved by combining the methods of war native to the various tribesmen of the borders. A rush of bull-necked, bow-legged Huns, mounted archers all, prepared the way for the charge of the mailed Gothic knights. The legionaries were carried off their feet by the speed and weight of these cavalry tactics. Against the Hunnish methods, in particular, they had no real answer. A two-days' battle ended in the surrender of the survivors. Maximus was caught at Aquileia by the pursuit, and was executed as a rebel taken in arms.

The battle of Siscia destroyed the flower of the western frontier army, and disappointed the hopes of the anti-Christians. The entry of Theodosius into Milan meant the confirmation of the Nicæan policy, the suppression of paganism and the restoration of Valentinian II. Theodosius spent three years in the west, revising and resettling the state of Italy and the provinces. He made a triumphal entry into Rome: but his presence there did not help the senate to secure the withdrawal of the anti-pagan laws. It was during his visit to Italy that the sensational episode occurred which more closely than any other is associated with his name.

The Massacre of Thessalonica arose out of words spoken in one of those moments when he could not be troubled to attend. The city had already been uneasy and resentful at the quartering of non-Roman troops upon its citizens. The military commander at Thessalonica, a Goth named Botheric, threw into prison (for reasons which would seem equally good in the eyes of a modern police magistrate) a popular racing driver of Thessalonica. Botheric may not have realized how much money had been laid upon the popular idol. The shocking news reached Italy that he had refused to release the man in time for the races; that there had been a popular rising; and that he and his officers had been brutally murdered and their bodies paraded through the streets.

It was a serious episode, and would be felt as such to-day. Theodosius was in one of those moods when he did not want to be distracted. He uttered some angry words which could be represented as an authority directing—or permitting—Botheric's fellow Goths to exact the penalty for murder from the same chance mob which had committed the crime. They did. Before Theodosius, realizing what he had done, could retract his order, they sent out announcements for a grand free day in the circus at Thessalonica. When the building was full, the doors were locked upon the helpless crowd inside, and they were slaughtered to the last man, woman and child. Dreadful and pathetic tales were told subsequently of the vain attempts of people outside to help those within. The Goths wiped the blood off their swords and retired. They had no apologies to offer, and never made any.

The responsibility lay, of course, on the shoulders of Theodosius. The Goths had merely acted after their kind. What followed is among the most famous episodes of history. The spirit of Cato and the great tribunes was not dead. It resided now in the fierce aristocrat, the archbishop of Milan, Ambrose. He met Theodosius in person on the steps of the cathedral of Milan, and turned the master of the world away from the precincts of a Christian church. Theodosius was wise. His moral stature in the eyes of his contemporaries and of future ages grew, rather than diminished, because he knew when to admit himself in the wrong. For a sinner so eminent, the period of penance was suitably shortened: but the precedent was established, and was never wiped out again, that the monarch of the Roman state was subject to the moral law and to the censure of its officers. It was a precedent destined to have vast consequences.

III

Paganism was now driven to its last stand. The absolute prohibition of pagan rites in Rome and Italy brought about a renewed effort on the part of the senate to find a way out. The old army had been so badly damaged at Siscia that it remained quiet. But the senate could not itself lead a rebellion nor would a revolt of half-armed and untrained agricultural labourers from its Italian estates have been particularly

formidable to the military authorities. Allies were wanted. They were ready to hand. The Frankish master-general Arbogastes, whom Theodosius had left in Italy as regent to govern in the name of the young Valentinian II, was willing to listen to suggestions. He knew that Valentinian hated him, and wished to get rid of him. The mysterious death of Valentinian was universally believed to be a murder for which Arbogastes was responsible. Arbogastes had a definite design in all his actions. He had nominated Frankish officers to all the important military positions in Gaul. He had complete control of the army. An alliance with the Italian landlords would exactly suit his purposes. The death of Valentinian was therefore followed promptly by the election of a dummy emperor in the person of Eugenius, a nominal Christian and secret pagan who would be acceptable to the senate. Arbogastes, as a Frank, could not have put his own claims forward with any hope of obtaining general support; and it is probable that he did not wish to accept personal responsibility for all the features of the policy he intended to carry out. Support from the senate meant the supplies that Arbogastes required for a war with Theodosius.

Theodosius recognized that it would be necessary to fight a second war, more dangerous than the last. Maximus had led the old legions to their final campaign: Arbogastes would be at the head of a modernized army, against which the tactics of the Huns and Goths would have no such instant success. He returned evasive and indeterminate answers to the communications of Eugenius, and meanwhile made ready for another western campaign. That Arbogastes was relying upon pagan support became clear. After several diplomatic refusals, Eugenius at last undertook to restore the temple properties and the religious liberties confiscated ten years before. The enthusiasm at Rome knew no bounds. The pagan party hastened to indulge in the freedom it had secured. The celebration of the great pagan festivals was feverish and extravagant. Perhaps their votaries realized that their time was short. What Arbogastes thought of some of the proceedings of his allies it would be interesting to know. The grim Frank must have been surprised at the statues of Jupiter (with thunderbolts) which were erected in suitable places to support with their influence the operations of his troops.

The decisive battle was fought on the upper waters of the Frigidus, now the river Wippach, which joins the Isonzo above Aquileia. It was a very different struggle from the battle with Maximus. For a whole day the Goths of Theodosius unsuccessfully attacked the defences of the Gallic army. When the second day dawned, Theodosius discovered that he had been surrounded during the night. The enveloping force, however, opened negotiations, and proposed, for a consideration, to abandon their party. The treaty was hastily arranged; its terms were scribbled by Theodosius in his own notebook, and signed. The second day's battle hinted that Jupiter too had turned traitor: for a fierce wind began to blow off the mountains, full in the faces of the Gallic army. By nightfall the troops of Arbogastes had been scattered, the master-general was in flight, and the hopes of the pagans were over. Eugenius was captured and executed. Arbogastes, finding that he could not make good his own escape across the Alps, killed himself.

Before the year was out, the last sparks of official paganism had been stamped out of Italy. Theodosius did not himself visit Rome. He nominated as commissioner an amiable man named Fabius Passifilus Paulinus, who superintended the enforcement of the law. From this time forward the old religions ceased to be observed in Italy, and Christianity was the sole form of worship permitted by the law and the government.

Twelve months later, Theodosius himself died at Milan. His work was accomplished. He had broken the power of paganism and spread one uniform mode of faith from Britain to the Persian border and from Cadiz to the mountains of Armenia. He had destroyed the armies that had backed paganism, and had broken their tradition. The work began by the battle of Hadrianople was completed at Siscia and the Frigidus. By his last instructions the empire was divided. His younger son Honorius was crowned at Milan: his elder son Arcadius at Constantinople. And now, at last, the division was destined to be permanent. Like two ships which long have rocked side by side, the Greek world and the Roman world parted: and the Roman world set out on the adventures of which the latest chapter is being written to-day.

IV

Immediately upon the death of Theodosius, the Goths in Illyria revolted. They were a large community: they felt that they could do better for themselves than submit to poor quarters in the Mæsan mountains: Theodosius, who had earned their respect, was dead: they knew the weakness of his successors: and at their own head now stood an able man, Alaric, who had served under Theodosius and had learnt the politics of the day.

Theodosius had left his son Honorius under the protection of a powerful regent and minister, a man of Vandal birth, named Stilicho. Honorius himself was, if not an imbecile, at any rate a nonentity—a singular son for a strong, hot-tempered man like Theodosius. For the best part of twenty-nine years Honorius was to reign over the western provinces of the empire: but during that time the personal influence he exercised and the personal impression he made upon his generation was nil. It did not matter. The machine was all that mattered. The imperial *comitatus* ruled over the provincial organization; and Stilicho's was the personality that counted. Honorius fulfilled the function of a thread of continuity.

He fulfilled this function perfectly, devoting most of his activity to poultry-farming, while the Vandal attacked the practical problems of government. The Goths were the difficulty. During his first year of office he went into Illyria to meet Alaric, but was requested by Constantinople to return. He did so, and Alaric and the Goths went on into Greece, prospected about, lived on the country, and devastated it. Stilicho promptly entered Illyria again, but this time with an army, blockaded Alaric in Phœlœ, and came to some secret agreement with him which was never made public. His aim was to attach the Goths to the interests of Honorius rather than those of Arcadius. He believed that he had been successful; but two years later Alaric accepted from the government of Constantinople the status of master-general in Illyria, and it became evident that he had made up his mind to try his fortune in the west. There was nothing to detain him in Illyria; Constantinople barred his road into Asia, and the Goths preferred to win land in a European climate not altogether alien

to them. Alaric retired north, and spent four years in planning and preparing. Stilicho also prepared.

Alaric had no difficulty in enlisting plentiful help from across the Danube, where the Hunnish supremacy was heavy upon the tribesmen, and they were only too anxious to try their fortune abroad, if reasonable hope and adequate leadership could be offered. The man who organized the filibusters was Radagast. For six years after the death of Theodosius the great enterprise was preparing. It was upon a scale such as Europe had scarcely seen before.

Late in the year A.D. 401 an enormous host of Goths, with their ox-wagons, their goods and their families, took the road over the eastern Alps into Italy, while another vast host, under the command of Radagast, assembled on the north bank of the Danube ready to enter Noricum and Rætia. While Honorius diligently fed his poultry, Stilicho started north, crossed the Alps, and met Radagast's expedition. To raise enough men he had sent for all the legions on the Rhine frontier. With the united forces so obtained he intercepted Radagast in Vindelicia and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the filibusters. Leaving them to make what they liked of the blow he returned as fast as he could. The Goths had spread themselves over the Padus valley, had invested Milan, and besieged Honorius behind its walls. Stilicho raised the siege of Milan and drove Alaric westward. A drawn battle was fought at Pollentia—a Pyrrhic victory for the Goths. Alaric effected his retreat back to Istria, and settled there to refit and reopen communication with his allies.

Alaric spent a year in repairing the damage of this first invasion of Italy. Then he tried his luck again and a second time was decisively defeated at the battle of Verona. Stilicho would not hazard his army by attacking a foe at bay; so Alaric a second time retired. This time he stopped in Illyria; and Honorius celebrated a triumph for the victories of Stilicho.

V

A respite of two years followed: but it was a respite only, while Radagast collected a fresh expedition. In the spring of A.D. 405 he passed the Danube with another vast host. Suevi, Burgundians and Vandals, together with the Alans,

marched with him. Central Europe seemed to be emptying itself upon the south. The break-through was from the Elbe and Oder Valleys, and it seems to have crossed the river somewhere near Regensburg. The advance-guard under Radagast poured through the Alpine passes and invaded Italy. It got as far as Fæsulæ. There it was stopped and blockaded by Stilicho's army. There was fighting; but most of the work was done by starvation and pestilence. The organization of the invaders was insufficient, and the immense crowd of people ate up the country as they passed through it. The rear-guard, warned that there was trouble at the front, turned westward. It had not yet reached the Danube, so it tramped through the country of the Alamanni, who refused to have anything to do with it, and burst across the Rhine, where the Franks fought it. The old Rhineland cities were burnt and pillaged—but the Franks channelled the flow and kept it away from their own lands. Chaos prevailed in western Europe. It may have been no worse than in the days of Gallienus—but the resources with which to meet it were now smaller. The land was devastated wheresoever the newcomers trod.

We need not be surprised if public opinion now turned against Stilicho. He had done prodigies—but he had not done enough. The British garrison once more elected an emperor of their own—a new Constantine—and proceeded to land in Gaul. Constantine prevented the invaders from advancing further in Gaul, and established an active government such as Gaul had not known for some years past.

Alaric looked upon all this with some uneasiness. He had no wish to expose his own people to all the hazards of a starving and plague-stricken Italy; and Gaul was not an inviting prospect, with Constantine in possession and Stilicho ready to intercept his retreat. He consented now to agree to the project which Stilicho had so long entertained. In return for the title of master-general and certain payments, he undertook to hold Illyria of Honorius. But Stilicho's own power in the *consistorium* was fatally shaken. The influence of Olympius was displacing that of the great soldier. The senate at first refused to vote the supplies required and finally did so only under protest. On August 23rd, A.D. 408, a *coup d'état* was

carried out. At Ticinum the members of the *consistorium* who supported Stilicho were murdered. Stilicho himself was still able to use military force in his own defence. He hesitated, and was lost. He was lured from the sanctuary of the church at Ravenna and executed. He and Gaius Marius no doubt had much to say to one another when they met in the next world. . . . His own retainers, the men who had had the chief part in defending Italy, were by a concerted arrangement massacred.

Alaric's mood changed. He had been disappointed to lose the arrangement made with Stilicho. He perhaps sincerely regretted his great rival; and he now had nothing to fear in Italy. Late in autumn the Goths set out. Nothing stopped their way. They turned into the Flaminian road at Fanum, and came to Rome.

The astonishment of the Romans was replaced by alarm when they realized that they were blockaded within their walls, and that no preparations had been made for defence. Hunger and pestilence were soon prevalent. Alaric made not the slightest attempt at assault. He merely waited. When Rome was thoroughly in the grip of starvation and disease, and no help came (though often promised) from the government at Ravenna, the stunned Romans opened negotiations with Alaric. He consented to lift the blockade in return for five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, and an agreed amount of silk, dyed leather, and pepper.

Olympius was against confirming the agreement with Alaric; but his own turn had now come and the destroyer of Stilicho was replaced by another minister, Jovius, who met Alaric and arranged terms of compromise. This was denounced behind his back and consequently fell through. Unable to make any kind of settlement, Alaric marched back to Rome. By seizing the granaries at Ostia he forced the city to surrender. He then nominated Priscus Attalus, the city prefect, as emperor; and Attalus appointed Alaric master-general. This was a curious proceeding, and a precedent for the future. Attalus, however, was of very little use, and was deposed; and as the government at Ravenna still refused to come to any arrangement with the Goths, Alaric marched back to Rome. The gates were shut; but the Salarian gate was broken open

by night and on the 24th August, A.D. 410 – a day to be marked in the calendar – the city by the Tiber fell into the hands of the Goths.

The sack of Rome lasted for six days: but it was not the material booty that struck the world with awe – it was the moral effect, the shattering of the prestige of eight hundred years. That the city of Camillus and Scipio, of Julius and Augustus, of Traian and Hadrian, should fall into the hands of tribesmen from beyond the Danube, seemed like the end of the world. Something unbreakable had broken: something eternal had ended.

Alaric did not tarry in Rome. At the end of the six days the wagons were packed with the tremendous booty, and went creaking southward down the Appian way. They wandered into southern Italy. Presently the news spread – Alaric was dead. The story was afterwards told, how they diverted the stream, buried him in the river Busentinus with all his treasures, released the stream again, and hid for ever the golden grave of the man who had sacked Rome. It was at any rate certain that they buried him somewhere: though his treasures most likely found their way into the hands of his kinsmen and friends.

VI

Atawulf, the brother-in-law of Alaric, succeeded him as King of the Goths. Alaric had entertained a project of passing over to Africa and establishing himself there; but Atawulf had other views. The year before Alaric died, the Suevi, Vandals and Alans in Gaul had come to terms with Constantine and had slipped across the Pyrenees into Spain. Constantine himself was overthrown and slain soon afterwards. The way therefore was clear for Atawulf to suggest his own policy – a Gothic settlement in Gaul. Two years after Alaric's death the agreement was signed. The Goths were to recover the lost provinces for the empire and hold them of Honorius. The wagons rolled back northward and over the Alps. The Gothic kingdom of southern Gaul and of Spain was the first to be founded in the Roman empire.

Serious as the damage done by these invasions may have been, it was scarcely worse than that done in the days of Gallienus. The real trouble was that the reaction was

different. No Claudius Gothicus arose to refound the empire. Honorius went on feeding his chickens.

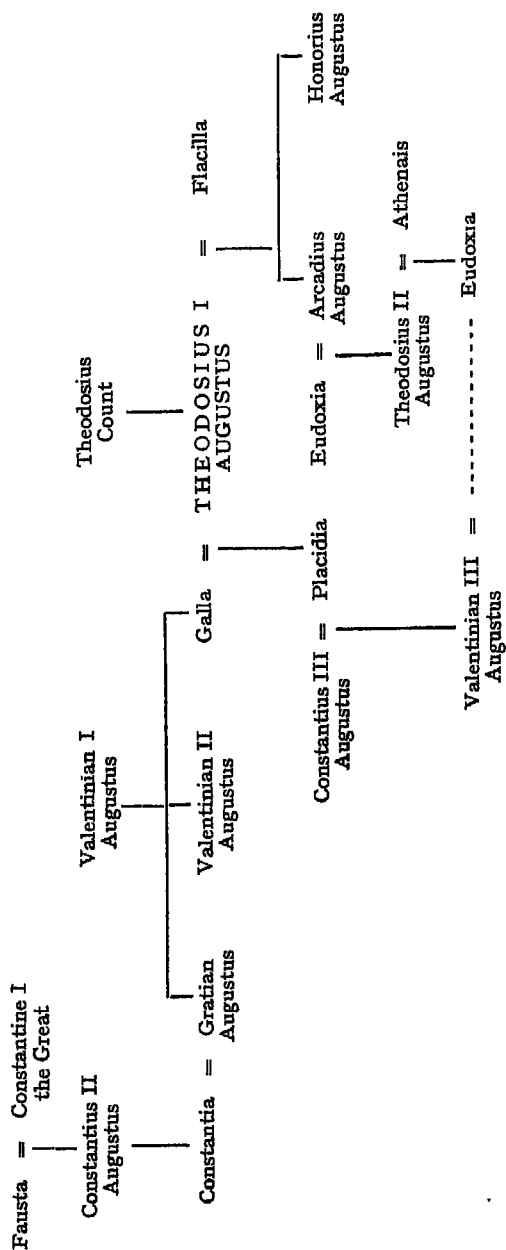
After the departure of the Goths Italy lay for some years in quiet; and perhaps some of the worst material damage was made good. All of it cannot have been repaired. Years of work and sacrifice are necessary after such invasions as those of Radagast and Alaric. But for a time central Europe was still, and no further migration appeared out of its depths.

In the year 423 Honorius died. A usurper named John tried to maintain himself as emperor, but it was no longer possible for such an informal candidate to make good. The nephew of Honorius – a boy of six – was nominated by the government at Constantinople and was crowned as Valentinian III. The new emperor reigned thirty years – but the reason was no longer that he was a strong man. He reigned so long because he did not now matter.

From the death of Theodosius onward, the emperors ceased to exercise their function. Stilicho had been the real ruler of the western provinces. After his death an interregnum had prevailed and the world seemed plunged in the lethargy of exhaustion. The revival which came after the death of Honorius was constituted by the rise of the minister Ætius. It was Ætius who negotiated an alliance with the Huns, and placed John upon the throne. John was betrayed and executed before Ætius and his army could arrive. Nothing daunted, Ætius proceeded to pay court to the mother of the victorious Valentinian. Ætius was handsome, clever and quite unscrupulous, and Placidia, like all the children of Theodosius, was stupid. He succeeded in becoming the real ruler of the west; and for twenty-nine years he kept control.

The rule of Ætius was exciting and erratic – a mixture of genuine ability with serious misjudgment. His attempt to safeguard his own power by destroying Count Boniface, the governor of Africa, led to the most disastrous results. Boniface invited the Vandals of Spain to his help; and in 429, they landed at Cæsarea. Too late, Boniface recognized his mistake. King Gaiseric, however, was not easily removed from anything he took hold of. The Vandals remained in Africa. The capture of Carthage set the final seal upon their possession of the province. The loss of Africa reduced the

THE HOUSE OF THEODOSIUS



control of the government to Italy alone. Britain had long since faded on the horizon: Gaul was in the hands of Franks, Burgundians and Goths whose allegiance was unreliable: Spain was a chaos in which Goths and Suevi struggled with the local inhabitants. Africa was now occupied by the Vandals and only Italy was left.

Could the empire still be rescued?

There was a possibility, if it could survive the next few years; for now at last was looming the advent of the force which had driven the refugee nations of central Europe upon the empire. Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Suevi, Alamanni—all had overflowed into the Roman provinces, flooding them with unwelcome guests: now came those who had driven them—the Huns. If the empire could survive the Huns, it might yet recover.

Two years after the capture of Carthage by the Vandals, the Huns, under their King Attila, began to cross the Danube. Illyria was in no position to defend itself and the government at Constantinople looked on helplessly while the country was devastated by the most cruel and sanguinary invaders it had known. For nine years Attila was gathering information respecting the geography of southern and western Europe. Then he grasped the principle that to conquer Europe it was necessary for him first to conquer Gaul and to proceed from that centre. He had already the greater part of eastern and central Europe in his possession. He prepared to cross the Rhine. The great advantage of Ætius was that he knew the Huns and their ways. He formed the grand alliance which was to meet and defeat Attila.

VII

Ætius had no considerable body of troops. The old retainers of Stilicho had been massacred; the old legions had long since perished. He passed the Alps with little more than a few personal bodyguards. The Goths, however, were not intending to march against Attila. If he came against them, they would fight; otherwise, they proposed to do nothing. Ætius argued against this view; and finally, he persuaded King Theodoric to accompany him northward. Word went before Ætius that men were wanted; and from all quarters

the tribesmen of the north-west pressed forward to join him – Franks, Burgundians, Saxons, Armoricans, Alans. A great army was marshalled.

Attila had crossed the Rhine just below the Necker valley and had plunged into the heart of Gaul. His siege of Orleans was interrupted by the approach of the relieving armies of Ætius and Theodoric. Attila at once raised the siege and retreated northward. He crossed the Seine and ultimately took ground near Châlons-sur-Marne. Camillus would have been amazed to behold the 'Roman' army that came marching up to Châlons under the command of Ætius, and even Marius might have admitted that the Cimbri and Teutones presented no more formidable spectacle than the Hunnish horsemen who faced them, flanked by half the fighting tribes of central Europe.

Attila hurled his Huns upon the centre of the allied line, broke it, and rolled up the half where the Goths were stationed. King Theodoric was killed and was trampled under the hoofs of the Huns. At the moment when all hung in the balance, the Gothic reserve in turn charged the Huns in flank. Night fell upon an indecisive battle. When the next day dawned, it was seen that the Huns had withdrawn into their wagon-circle. The allies had suffered heavy losses. They retired from the field; and Attila, as soon as he was assured that there was no pursuit, retreated back across the Rhine.

He invaded Italy in the year following but did not press his invasion. He had not the equipment necessary for taking fortified cities. His death, which followed soon after, delivered Europe from the fear which for eighty years had weighed upon the thoughts of men.

The Hunnish peril had passed, and the empire survived !

But unlike Gallienus, Ætius was not destined to launch the empire upon a new career of success. His hopes were suspected and his aims divined. Valentinian himself¹ – the useless robot-emperor – struck the first stroke and Ætius was murdered by the courtiers who surrounded him. The allies of Ætius fell with him.

¹ '... drawing his sword – the first sword he had ever drawn ...' – is one drop of the acid with which Gibbon etches the picture. (*Decline and Fall*, III, 477.)

Valentinian himself was murdered a year later.

The death of Valentinian III made little difference to the course of history; but the death of Ætius meant the fall of the last Roman who could control the machine of government. So well did the Vandal Gaiseric appreciate the situation, that he lost no time in fitting out a naval raid upon Rome. From Carthage his fleet sailed across to Ostia and for fourteen days the city was in the hands of the Vandals. The booty was carefully collected and it was vast in amount. Gaiseric returned to Africa with all he could carry of valuables and prisoners.

It was hardly possible now that the imperial government could recover its power. The Goths sent their friend, Avitus, who reigned for a short time in virtue of their influence; but Avitus was promptly overthrown by Count Ricimer, the commander of the troops. Ricimer succeeded to the power of Ætius. For seventeen years he ruled Italy. By his agency the most important government posts were filled with countrymen or dependents of his own. He made and unmade emperors. He had no policy other than that of remaining in possession of the rich and profitable offices of state: but in this policy he was completely successful.

Though the Hunnish peril was passed, the empire was still disintegrating.

VIII

Up to this point, the story of the east and west had been the same. At Constantinople also the empire was still failing and dissolving. A Goth, Aspar, directed the policy of the east, just as a Suevian, Ricimer, directed that of the west. But a year or two after Ricimer's long supremacy began, Aspar secured the election as emperor of a man named Leo. By one of the amusing ironies of history Aspar had been trapped by a subtler and more profound dissimulator than himself. Instead of being the humble tool of the Goth, Leo refounded the eastern empire, so that from that time a great renovation began, a new era of prosperity set in, and the power of Constantinople rose towards a new height. Leo understood what was wrong with the empire. The guiding function, the controlling hand had been paralysed. He had reconstructed

the *comitatus* in the east. He determined to do the same for the west.

His plan was to attack the Vandal power in Africa, destroy it, and enter Italy with all the power and prestige of victory. He could then undertake a thorough purge of the western *comitatus*; and from that point it would be reasonable to anticipate the complete and successful reconquest of the whole of the lost provinces, up to Britain itself. The scheme was a great one, and had it succeeded, the Roman empire in the west would not have fallen. But Leo was not successful in his Vandal war. After vast preparations and catastrophic losses, he gave up the idea of conquering Africa. His ally, the western emperor, Anthemius, fell back into the hands of Ricimer. When Leo killed the traitor Aspar, who had wrecked the Vandal war, Ricimer replied by killing Anthemius. The power of the German ministers, destroyed in the east, remained unshaken in the west.

The decay was then swift and decisive. At his death, Ricimer relinquished his power to Gundovald. Gundovald lasted only a short time, as he succeeded to the kingship of the Burgundians, and left Italy. After Gundovald, Orestes held the power. The names of the emperors they appointed and overthrew are of little importance. But Orestes was a Roman and he nominated his son Romulus as emperor. The only claim of Romulus to celebrity is the fact that he bore the same name as the grim bandit who was reputed by tradition to be the founder of Rome. As 'Romulus Augustulus' he has a little niche to himself in history. He was the last monarch of Rome, as Romulus the son of Rhea Silvia was the first.

But Orestes had to face demands from his own men which were difficult to deal with. They demanded a change of status. Instead of a purely stipendiary status, they wished to be given a claim to one-third of the rent charges of Italy. This claim would have turned them from a paid body-guard to a feudal nobility. Orestes hesitated. In part he may have felt unsure of his ground: but as a Roman, it is possible that he hated the thought. Another candidate for power pushed him aside. A Scyrian named Odovacar undertook to grant the demands if he were given the opportunity of considering them. Orestes was promptly deposed; Odovacar was elected –

and Odovacar carried through the policy required of him. One third of the rents of Italy was set aside for his men. In order to ensure that this policy should not be reversed by an emperor like Leo, Romulus Augustulus was deposed, and the senate was directed to pass a resolution disclaiming any desire for a separate emperor for the western provinces, expressing its confidence in Odovacar and returning the imperial regalia to Constantinople. Odovacar asked merely the humble status of master-general in Italy.

Stern eyes and acute minds in Constantinople scrutinized these terms and ultimately granted them. There were two sides to the question.

So Romulus Augustulus departed into obscurity, and his imperial regalia reposed in the strong room of the palace of Constantinople, and Odovacar the Scyrian went on reigning, as Ricimer and Ætius had reigned, but without an emperor to take up the time, temper and money of the government.

What had happened?

IX

Only this—that the imperial *comitatus* had vanished from Italy, and had returned the authority it possessed to the other *comitatus* in Constantinople; and in its place stood the *comitatus* of a northern king, Odovacar the Scyrian, not an imperial body, and putting forward no claims to rule outside Italy, but just such a power as the similar *comitatus* of the Gothic kings in Spain and Aquitaine, or those of the Frankish kings in northern Gaul, or those of the English kings in Britain. For a long time to come the minor machinery of political organization in Italy, and in many places throughout the empire, went on working in connection with the new powers. Changes came slowly. Many a simple man lived through the revolution and never knew.

The oligarchy had gone; the old army had gone; the new army which replaced the latter had also gone, at Hadrianople, Siscia and the Frigidus. Now the *comitatus* which replaced the oligarchy had gone. By degrees each and all of the organizations which in the past had absorbed the stranger, trained him, and turned him out Roman in heart and soul, had gone. The cause of the break-down in the west was a failure in the

educative powers of the secular state. The church was still able to train her sons in her tradition so that it was perpetuated, but the secular state had been unable to do the same. It had ceased to hand on its tradition; it had ceased to be able to formulate it. So in Italy the Roman state withered and died.

For another thousand years the Roman state perpetuated itself and its tradition in the east. In the west an altogether new time began, and the national states, which had their origin from the Goths, Burgundians, Franks and English, went on growing into a future full of wonderful adventures, strange discoveries, and great achievements.

The damage and confusion wrought in the days of their beginnings took long to repair. Europe was only slowly lifted out of the economic collapse. But the dissolution of the empire was separate and distinct from this collapse. The empire, as a political organization, never fell. It dissolved *like a seed in the furrow and grew up again into a fresh cycle of life*. 'That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' From the city of Camillus, that rose beside the Tiber, has sprung all the political evolution of the modern world. The principles it taught have spread and grown till they are practised—or essayed—in every quarter of the globe and by every race of men. Its history still remains the explanation of what we are, and the key to what we shall be.

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